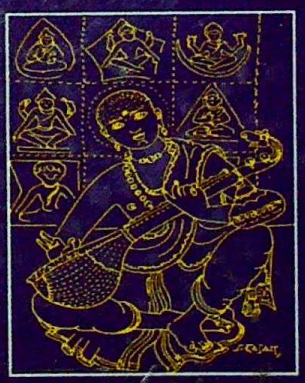
Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

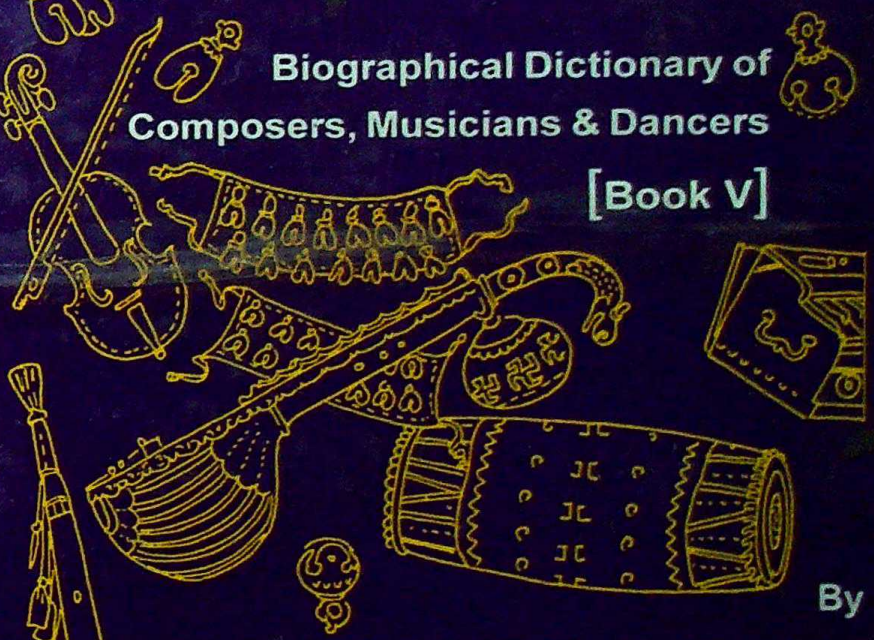


R
927
RAJ-T

THE MELODIC GARLAND

Biographical Dictionary of Composers, Musicians & Dancers

[Book V]



By

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

2000

Carnatic Classicals

Chennai - 600 020. India.

by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and e

THE MELODIC GARLAND

N. RAJAGOPALAN

A
927
RAJ-T

Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection,

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

R
927

पुस्तकालय
RAJ - T गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार
वर्ग संख्या.....
आगत संख्या 104320

पुस्तक-विवरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है। इस तिथि सहित ३० वें दिन यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापिस आ जानी चाहिए। अन्यथा ५० पैसे प्रति दिन के हिसाब से विलम्ब-दण्ड लगेगा।

vernment of

Stock Verification-2024

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

THE MELODIC GARLAND

Biographical Dictionary
of
Composers, Musicians & Dancers
[BOOK V]

104320

By

'*Garland*' N. Rajagopalan

'*Honorary Adviser*' : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

104320

2000

CARNATIC CLASSICALS
"Mayur Apartments"
3/1, 24th Cross Street, Indira Nagar,
Chennai - 600 020. (INDIA)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Melodic Garland

This is–

A dedication to Art & Artistes.
A pioneering work.
A gargantuan venture.
A non-commercial project.
A labour of sublime love.
A treasure-house of information
A source book for all.

❀❀❀

"Rajagopalan sacrificed a remunerative job thirteen years back to take up this work which governments and universities should have undertaken. Meritorious work."

–Padma Vibhūshan **Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar**

❀❀❀

'Rajagopalan created history by publishing the *Garlands.* A thesaurus. Critical appraisals with enviable freshness of language; a landmark publication.' .

–Emeritus Professor **T.S. Parthasarathy**

❀❀❀

'Bloomed in the Garden of Melody; makes of the author a romantic litterateur.'

–**Dr. Sulochana Rajendran**, Editor, ***Shanmukha***

❀❀❀

"I do not have enough and adequate words to describe the charm and appeal."

–**Dr. Uma Roy**, Editor, ***Sangeetham*** [CMANA] USA

❀❀❀

[Rights Reserved by Author]

First Edition **2000 C.E.**
Price **Rs. 260/-**

❀❀❀

Printed by ..... **Chengacherial Printers,** 141, North Usman Road, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017. [Phone : 8277900, 8253050]

Published by ..... **Carnatic Classicals,** "Mayur Apartments" 3/1, 24th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Chennai - 600020, India. [Phone : 4417196]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PREFACE

'Oḻai, oḷi ellām ānāi niye' – **Appar**

"Ayam nija parovetti Gñānam laghuchetasam
Udara charitanamtu Vāsudaiva Kutumbakam"

[The narrow-minded person counts others as his own or of others.
But the broad-minded person counts the entire world as one family.]
[Bharatiya sages, saints and bards viewed the Universe as one.]

✡ ✡ ✡

Music is the one element that can bring and bind mankind together wherever it be and to whatsoever tribe or community the individual happens to belong. Pure, traditional, aesthetic music has innate vibrancy, enduring energy and profound capability to rouse dormant, noble, progressive and salutary instincts in the human, and even among animals, enlighten and elevate them to ethereal heights of morality and divinity and install them on the highest pedestal of 'man as a reflection of God' in conformity with the scriptural dictum *Aham Brhmāsmi*. From *Vēdic* days, sages and saints, singing bards and artistes have proved the efficacy of music as the prime instrument for spiritual and medical therapy to secure *ṡantam, soukhyam, maṅgalam* and *ṡivam,* purification of heart and soul and ultimate self-realization. Bharatiya *saṅgitam* has all along hovered around such fundamental concepts advocating and stressing moral codes and spiritual goals constantly and consistently. Composers, musicians and dancers, barring occasional aberrations, have upheld and propagated the ideals through the resplendent medium of music and dance with absolute faith in results and continuity backed by passionate determination. Indian music could not have survived in such robust health and wealth over many a millennia but for its wedding to spiritual pursuits primarily and adherence to self-imposed values and constraints and *dharmic* practice and use. Pure music is universal and is the prime asset of *Vāsudeiva Kutumbakam.* There are bound to be regional variations owing to causes like local customs and habits, faith and conduct. But chaste music is singularly free from petty thoughts and considerations. These criteria had always been upheld and emphasized guided by considerations as pure as the purest air and fire.

Melodic Garland? Yes, it is the conjuring title suggested by *manōdharma* and adopted for this fifth and last volume in the *Garland* series. But a doubt arose whether a garland could ever be the fertile ground, fountain or cradle of melody? Why not? The supreme saintly composer, Sri Tyagaraja sends around a musical message in *rāga Ritigaula* :

Rāgaratna māligache Rānjillu nata ṡata – [*Rāgaratna*]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

[The Lord draws pleasure adorning himself with garland studded with diamonds in the shape of a hundred *rāgas*. Let us worship Him and secure all blessings. You are invited.]

Further, Dr. V. Raghavan, while describing the eminence of Jayadeva, Kṣetrajña, Purandaradasa and Tyagaraja, hails them as fragrant gold, adopting the embellished usage in sanskrit literature - *Hemnah Paramāmōdah.* There are also the accepted popular *rāgamālika* [garland of *rāgas*] and the rare *rāgatālamālika* [garland of *rāga* and *tāla* structures] in musical composition. Thus the title *Melodic Garland* for the farewell volume in the *Garland* series has commended itself as but absolutely proper and appropriate.

✡ ✡ ✡

Art is that broad-based universal cradle in which diverse cultures are born and flourish and civilization gets graded based on aesthetic practices, refinements, attainments and attitudes. It is the yardstick by which people of a country or community are assessed and ranked. Art not only enlightens and elevates but inspires and broadens the vision of every one including composers, musicians, dancers and art-lovers. It is principally due to the broad-minded wisdom, enduring and enlightened culture of the artistic and art-conscious people of Bharat that they have craved, from the dawn of civilization, not for their own happiness and salvation but for the welfare of the entire world community :

'Sarvē janāh sukhinō bhavantu'
'Ellōrum inburṛirukka vēnduvade allāl vēru onṛum aṛiyēn Parāparamē!'.
[May the people of the Universe be happy! I know of no other prayer, O Lord!]

These fundamental prayers for the happiness of the peoples of the world are echoed on every occasion, in every original home and by every original community of Bharat. It is the inculcated, inherited, embedded and inspired virtue of the Indian. Is there any parallel to this basic faith, averment, practice and matchless prayer? This is superior to all the 'isms', the world boasts of and are paraded with! This *Vāsudeiva Kutumbakam* is perhaps the noblest ideal or goal that India is wedded to and has always cherished and chosen to bestow on the world suffering from petty quarrels and animosities.

Music universally appeals and is universally acceptable. It aids the propagation of moral and spiritual values more effectively than other instruments and it is free for all to imbibe, appreciate and enjoy. India has naturally and wisely chosen it as the principal mode and instrument of education and enlightenment, propagation and publicity, not to speak of entertainment. Saints and sages, bards and *vāggēyakāras*, musicians, dancers and dramatists have vied with each other in exploiting the lavish gifts of this oldest art all

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

along and had lost no occasion to apply its efficacy successfully. The musical wealth of India is himalayan in output, as varied as its rivers and as fragrant and charming as its wealth of flowers. [Musical therapy, agro and pisci-musical cultures are fertile fields for further extensive investigation and exploitation.]

Carnatic music is but the continuation of the most ancient, living Indian music. This system has witnessed a vibrant, glorious, pre-historic and historic past, blest with weighty contribution and unsurpassed attainments and is passing through an effulgent present though the sphere of influence is contracting. The system has been generous in presenting galaxies of stalwarts, wizards and maestros, vocalists, instrumentalists, percussionists, musicologists, composers, hymnodists and dancers, several of whom are trail-blazers and trend-setters or have legated either immortal works of the highest cerebral flavour or soul-filling, dazzling compositions which captivate and enthrall, besides artistes and dancers. There have always been ceaseless efforts with genuine dedicated fervour and passionate enthusiasm to keep alive and hold aloft the torch of this finest of fine arts in all its grandeur and glorified traditions.

The Ganges, the Cauvery and other rivers, the himalayas, the Ellora, Ajanta and Mahabalipuram cave and rock temples, the *Vēdas* and the *Gita,* the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* the temples such as those at Thanjavur, Chidambaram, Srirangam, Madurai and Rameswaram and other enduring marvels symbolize the *śrēyas* and the *prēyas* of the Indian nation and its marvelous civilization. Is there any other nation which presents and could boast of such matchless and varied treasures? Men may come and go but verdant arts and culture and the primacy given to arts shine forever in all resplendent beauty, majesty, glory and message. Time fleets and erases memories of men and women of eminence on whose contribution to arts the country relies and delights. The present is but the child of the past and the future is impregnated in the womb of the present. Inspiration and progress are born of the bedrock of continuity and have vital need for remembering the captains and soldiers of the musical brigades, the *gurus* and *sisyas* of the art. *Sans* artistes, where would art be? *Sans* arts, where is culture or civilization? Without Valmiki, where would be the resplendent epic *Râmâyana*? Without Vyasa, where could be the inspiring *Mahâbhârata?* Without Gopalakrishna Bharati, who would have spun out the magnificent opera *Nandanâr*? If Mahakavi Subramania Bharati was not born, how seriously national, social, reformist and musical fields would have suffered? But for Kalidasa, who could have imagined of the honeyed tales of *Sâkuntalam* or the magnificent dancer-princess Malavika? But for *Śilappadikâram* of Ilango, who could have gathered a view of the pristine atmosphere permeated by music and dance in the South of this country nearly two millennia back? From another angle it would be fruitful to ponder over where would Rama be without his brothers and monkey brigades? Perhaps one may even like to shift the emphasis

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

to the machinations and misdeeds of Mandara and Ravana! Even so, without a Bharata, where would amaranthine *Nātya Śāstra* be? To extend this further, where would Tyagaraja be without the Tillaistanams, Wallajahpets and Umayalpurams? To highlight and emphasize the need for moral, spiritual and physical support and participation of one and all in any common endeavour, the gracious poet brings in the anecdote of the tiny squirrel contributing its might in the construction of the *Śetu* bridge to Sri Lanka! Art provides the *kṣētra* [field], nominates the actors [*karthas*] investing them with aptitude, attitude, inspiration, training and the vision to explore ever-fresh avenues to sustain growth, promote cultural wealth and upgrade the salient credentials of our civilization. If art is the prophet, the artiste is the engineer, administrator, executor, promoter and exponent, all in one. In this noble *yajña*, the crusade, hundreds of dedicated, devoted men and women participate heart and soul. How many have sacrificed their lives in the cause of art? History has fortunately recorded enough to identify the remarkable continuity, enduring contribution and dazzling blossoms of art which have reached the acme of excellence and immaculate perfection in the spheres of both ***lakṣana*** [theory – science] and ***lakṣya*** [robust popular practice].

Theory normally tends to gather extra overburden, exhibiting proneness to set rigid standards and seek to highlight details like the Constitution of India ever open to unending interpretation stifling healthy growth. When Sri Rama trekked the streets of Ayodhya in the company of Laksmana, following Sage Viswamitra, people got obsessed with the incredible beauty of individual limbs of the great prince and none had the heart to tear his eyes off therefrom to gather a comprehensive survey! [I am not referring to the five blind men who were obsessed with individual limbs of the elephant since they were not men of aesthetic sense as those of Ayodhya.] It is so with many a law-giver of greater or lesser eminence. Emphasis may be strong on select themes and tradition from individual points of view. It is also said that the tribe of eminent musicologists, like eminent constitutional pundits, is on the *avarōhana* now. Perhaps few could now bring forth a masterpiece comparable to those of Sarṅgadēva, Somanatha, Ilango, Rama Matya, Kalladar, Govinda Dikṣita, Venkatamakhin or Subbarama Dikṣita. Of course, is there any constraint of time or limit to perfection and advent of such law-givers in the musical field? 'Who can beautify Beauty?', the tamil adage may aver. The process shall go on, perhaps in fits and starts, different people taking a fancy for, or specializing in, individual segments or comprehensively.

In the rush and rustle of life, gems of men and women, captains and soldiers of art, who sacrifice theirs all and make remarkable, undying contribution slip out of memory into realms of anonymity. [In fact in an All-India cadre examination, to a question on Sun Yat-Sen, First President of the Chinese Republic, many distinguished candidates wrote that he was a Chief Minister of West Bengal!] As the late, lamented artiste of international repute,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Yehudi Menuhin aptly observed :

'All artistes are some gigantic Tennysonian band of light brigadiers for ever doing and dying without questioning their fate.'

The situation was much the same before, as arts – music, dance, language, sculpture, painting and all - were fundamentally non-commercial in India. Teaching and learning in languages, arts and medicine were free. Till about the middle of the twentieth century approximately, glorious *gurukulavāsa* was in vogue in full stream. It has now become an unattainable dream. Things have changed significantly. Artistes have all flocked to urban, more particularly metropolitan, centres. Corporate help fortunately has come in a big way in the wake of the disappearance of royalty and landlords. But still, how many of the whole-time artistes could be said to be well off? Many popular, young artistes have one leg in music and another in some insured, cushioned job. Many an enterprising young artiste is unwilling to put all his time and efforts in the musical basket due to uncertainty about his own future and social commitments. Fortune also is monstrously freakish in favouring a few, not necessarily the best and the deserving. Full many a gem of purest ray serene, the dark unfathomable recesses of recognition and memory ruthlessly suppress and condemn them to anonymity. Should such musical souls be ignored?

Can the physical system be sustained on vitamin tablets alone? Can a country be run with Nehrus and Vallabhai Patels or Subhash Chandras alone? Enduring valour, success and laurels of an army depend as much on the vision and direction of the commander as on the valour, spirit and determination of the troupes. Sage Sukha might not have had occasion to expatiate on *Bhāgavatam* without a Parikshit! Lord Yama [Lord of Death and Dharma] is certainly powerful and feared. But who could approach him or where could be an occasion for Him to unfold the truths conveyed in *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* in the absence of that *jñāna vṛddha*, young Naciketas! These *upaniṣads* reveal that truth and knowledge require the presence of the giver as well as a receiver too! Tyagaraja needed the Tillaisthanam, Umayalpuram and Wallajahpet disciples to give life to his compositions! A record only of the lives of commanders, however eminent they be, would ill-suffice the needs of the nation and ill-serve the cause.

The country has thus a duty to take notice and record –

the inspiring lives of the valiant crusaders of the art, their undying contribution, experiences and all that is left as legacy to inspire the present and the posterity and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the boasts of heraldry, the pomp of power, attainments and achievements of those who grace the field and give life and succour to the propagation and continued popularity and inspiration of the noble art.

The original definition of *saṅgitam* has brought within its scope *nätyam* too since dance is but the overt, elegant, expressive wing of *saṅgita* and portrayal of the embedded emotions, hidden meanings and artistic and cultured projections of *sāhitya*. Hence *bharatanātyam* has been given an appropriate place in this book. Of course, it is a beginning here in this *Melodic Garland*.

✡ ✡ ✡

This work, however, is such that it qualifies to be taken up only by governments or institutions with vast resources in men and material. There were eminent men capable of doing the work magnificently too. But the magnitude of labour, time and investment, difficulties and constraints had presumably scared them all away in the past and nothing much had happened except the isolated, piecemeal but valiant endeavours, in a highly limited way though it be, of dedicated eminent scholars of high repute like Subbarama Diksitar, Abraham Pandithar and Dr. U.Ve: Swaminatha Ayyar individually and Prof. Sambamurti with the might of the University behind him. The West is seen to have brought out massive works of this kind. This author took it up absolutely by chance, by Divine Will as eminent musicologist T.S. Parthasarathy said at the commencement of my work in 1988, and has presented about 1400 lives of vocalists, instrumentalists, musicologists, composers and hymnodists in four volumes titled :

A Garland
Another Garland
Yet Another Garland and
The Fragrant Garland.

These books, products of ten years [1987-1996] of single-minded, devoted, solid, dedicated toil [which, in fact, landed the author in the Apollo Hospital (not in *Sūrya mandala* but at) Chennai], are perhaps the only one where biographies of such a large number of lives of the past and the present are given in a nutshell for ready reference of students, teachers, researchers, music-lovers, artistes and the public. They have been found to be very popular. The *Garlands* are source books of reference for all times, a treasure house of facts and information : have been welcomed by eminent authorities, media and institutions and have been fully taken advantage of in India and abroad. The presentation of the series has particularly been specially honoured by the Madras Telugu Academy,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat, Bangalore and by the Carnatica Archival Centre for Music and Dance, Chennai. The massive, varied, arduous and multi-pronged, pioneering work is absolutely a non-commercial dedication to art and artistes.

'Studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability.
Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and
Quite a few are to be chewed and digested',

observed the Father of Inductive Method in Science, Francis Bacon. The study of these volumes is not only for record to be exhumed by researchers alone but for delight, knowledge and generation of capability and inspiration. **These are all there for everybody to taste, chew and digest as best as each can.**

The great Samuel Johnson said, in sheer despair and disgust, that such a work would be taken up only by a blockhead! I bow my head in absolute concurrence but with a sense of fulfilment and a smile. A smile as many a blockhead has done or achieved enduring works! By modern standards, it is a thankless task, non-commercial and too vast and himalayan for an individual to aspire for and accomplish. Sane advice and experience deterred me not, nor the massive work, study, labour and attention had restrained me from pursuing the work. Destiny has willed that it should be done and by Grace of God, it has been done.

'Bhāratam paḷam peru nādu
Nīr adan pudalvar;
Inninaivu agatrādīr',

ordained patriot-poet Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati. True to his patriotic advice, the *Garlands* ensure that composers, artistes, musicologists, etc. **shall live for ever** in the fertile, fragrant memory of the readers, both present and of posterity, as sons and daughters of this ancient *Punyabhūmi* and *Dharmabhūmi*. Swami Vivekananda, in his profound sage wisdom, most figuratively but humourously observed :

'If education is identical with information, libraries
would be the greatest sages and encyclopaedias *riṣis*.'

True, thou art gracious Swamiji! Education does not end in libraries; but shall we say, it commences, sustains and advances itself? *Sans* the accumulated wisdom stored therein that helps to instruct, inform, equip and inspire, the seeker will be like *gōpis* in battered boats in the midst of storm-stricken waters as most vividly and picturesquely drawn by Tyagaraja in *Nouka Caritra*. A good book is like a beacon-light, perhaps, more than that. A saint, sage and preceptor can advise, instruct, inspire and enlighten only disciples

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

before him. He has necessarily to leave behind the legacy of the imprints of his immeasurable wisdom and teachings in the shape of the *Vēdas* [*śruti*], epics, *upaniṣaḍs,* etc in the library – personal or private for posterity and even the present, as every master, *guru* or codifier is not within the reach of everyone else and for all times. **'Illiteracy is dangerous; but cultural illiteracy is much more dangerous',** said Nani Palkhiwala. Knowledge of stalwarts, captains and warriors of art not only arrests cultural illiteracy but frees one from ignorance and helps in advancing his march towards perfection, knowledge and wisdom.

✡ ✡ ✡

[Perhaps a word about my being invisibly led into the work on the *Garlands* may be permitted here at this stage even as I seek to bid goodbye to the ***Garlands***.] Born at Aduthurai, close to Govindapuram made holy by the stay of the great Bhagavata Mahapuruṣa Swami Bodhendra, I belong to Mandhai, a village invested by Nature with lavish environmental charms barring a hillock [which, in due process of poetic justice, was deliberately denied to it to avoid jealous looks from the thousands of other villages in Thanjavur district, which have all been ruthlessly denied that proud possession. Swamimalai has, of course, arrogated to itself the word *malai* - mountain - suffixing it to its name conscious of the fact that none dares to challenge its improper addition as it is the proud Divine Resort of Lord Muruga and Lord Swaminatha.]

River Natanakavery bounds Mandhai on the north. The Perumal temple at the southern end of the main street lends charm to the landscape. It has been the scene of nightlong *bhajans* which infused a musical and devotional atmosphere in and around. The marriage of Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar was celebrated close to this temple in 1926. I remember veteran Subbarama Bhagavatar and his sons from Perambur, home of Sri Bodhendra Swamigal, presenting thrilling, chaste, unforgettable *bhajans* six decades back for three continuous days. To herald the advent of the next millennium, there was *bhajan* in the first week of January 2000. The nagaswara artistes from adjacent Tiruppampuram provide *maṅgala isai* for all auspicious occasions in our village enjoying what is called *kāniyātchi* rights [monopoly].

There used to be annual and triennial *terukūttus*. Though called folk dramas, they were enacted by *pucca* professionals. They were termed as *terukūttus* since they were enacted in improvised sheds at street junctions, river-beds or temple foregrounds. They were in no way less brilliant than dramas of today, the difference being accounted for only by lighting, acoustics, costumes and other extraneous items including polluted atmosphere. They were mostly performed by dramatic troupes from adjacent Tiruppampuram [a cradle of nagaswara, etc. artistes] and occasionally from other places. The village is not far off

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

from, and is encircled by, places the very mention of which would bring to mind conjuring musical experiences to many of the connoisseurs in the musical field, like Tiruppampuram [Flautist T.N. Swaminatha Pillai], Konerirajapuram [Vaidyanatha Ayyar], Tiruvilimilalai [Nagaswara Brothers], Mudicondan [Venkatarama Ayyar], Kiranur [nagaswara maestros], Kothavasal [Venkatarma Ayyar who legated *varṇams* which shall be the eternal inspiration to everyone in the field], Komal [Kalyanaraman] and many more. Everyone would sing in my family, my mother getting the prime seat as is the case with most hindu homes but none was formally trained. A lonely *sruti* box and a few books of songs alone were the musical equipment apart from the heavy collection of books in sanskrit on religion. Groups of boys would start at 8 p.m. or so and trek the distance to Tiruvilimilalai through harvested fields to hear the Tiruvilimilalai nagaswara Brothers on the Rishabha vahana day, fifth day of the annual festival. Whether we listened to the music or not, we used to start back only when the sun was seen to be in a hurry to proclaim the dawn of the next day. How wonderful and thrilling were those days of 'simple joy and destiny obscure'! My study of sanskrit stopped with *Samkṣēpa Rāmāyaṇa* as most of the schools could not stomach the provision of study in sanskrit. [Any language but not sanskrit would seem to have been the cry!] I was not less proficient in tamil as borne out by the fact of my taking the prize for tamil in intermediate in the College.

God was presumably in a mood of benediction in blessing me with a sweet felicitous voice. I was naturally selected to take the role of heroine in the drama enacted in 1933 by the Higher Elementary School, T. Palur, Udayarpalayam taluk. Principal actors then had to enjoy personality and sing well too *sans* mikes. [The days of puny heroes destroying scores of well-built rowdies as shown in films with scant regard to the sanity and judgment of the viewers had not arrived yet!] That was my first public exposure to music and drama. A year later, I was with uncle Mandhai Sa. Krishna Ayyar who through his Sri Krishna Bhajana Mandir used to celebrate all festive and religiously important days with concerts, *bhajans*, etc., by stalwart musicians of the day. The group photo that adorns the earlier *Garlands* was one of those taken during one of the anniversary celebrations. He spent all his earnings on these and in prayers. Once I was humming a tune heard at the *kalakṣēpam* the previous night at the Bhajan Mandir. Eminent Papanasam Sivan [what a simple, unostentatious musical soul he was, rich in his musical wealth!] heard it by chance and, convinced presumably of my aptitude, took me to his residence in the Theosophical Society campus, Adyar and commenced my training in music in 1934-35. It ended when he had to go north for films. I tried twice later, once at Salem and then at Chennai, to resume. Both ended after a year each abruptly. Alas! Philosophers assert that everything that has a beginning shall *ipso facto* have an end too. That dictum played havoc with my training with fanatic vehemence. I tried, while young, to take to dance but that too in those distant times was not possible for a boy. I acted in amateur dramas, initially as heroine and sang

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

songs on the stage and then as hero when heroes to suit my stature who could sing too could not be secured! The first appearance at Madras was at the Waltax Theatre in a minor role in the august company of stalwart dramatists, P.S. Velu Nair, P.S.Velammal and Nott Annaj Rao. In *Samsāra Bandham* staged at the Museum Theatre, Chennai on October 8, 1944, I played the role of heroine and it was lauded by the then Editor of the magazine *Nāradar* as excellent. *Sarōja* was another drama staged at Victoria Public Hall on April 13, 1945 and I donned the role of the hero, a doctor-patriot. I was associated with the next drama, *Manōhara*. I appeared at the Vani Vilas Theatre, Kumbakonam again in 1953 but I had to withdraw from histrionic activities not being able to attend rehearsals. Thus a life devoted to participation in arts was not my cup of milk – [Note: I do not take tea; hence a cup of milk, please!]

Little things not infrequently do suggest or inspire great deeds. Scientific inventions and discoveries, it is well known, mostly have their roots in ordinary commonplace occurrences. Even so in January 1988, I got reminded of the ballad "Solomon Grundy was born on Monday...Buried on Sunday. That is the story of Solomon Grundy." Like the innocuously simple songs of Siddhars [*Māngāi pālunḍu, malai mēliruppōrkku, tēngāip pāl ēdukkaḍi*? etc.], this ballad stirred me up and conveyed a philosophic message! Suddenly, by grace of God, I was possessed with a feeling to do something that would outlast my ordained life. I was congenitally and by upbringing unfit to be inspired or lured by people of the class of Nero Claudius Caesar of Rome [37-68 C. E.] and lesser mortals of such tribes. So the direction to take was restricted to the proper *Rāja mārga*. The Cholas provided long, broad corridors [*prahāras*] to most of the temples in *Chola Desa*. But how many take the trouble to come around them [*pradakṣina*]? Quite a few! Grass grow profusely where human legs should stamp them out. This has a point to the work I took up too!

Just then by chance I found massive editions of Biographical Dictionary of Western artistes in the British Council Library and naturally, my mind got obsessed with the idea of preparing a parallel for votaries of Carnatic [South Indian] Classical music. The eminent musicologist T.S. Parthasarathy then observed, 'God seems to get specified jobs done by His chosen people!'. Presumably he was correct. The *saṅkalpa* for a career in arts having been frustrated, a *prāyaschitta* was necessary perhaps. With *kāruṇya* [profound sympathy], God led me into the *yajña* to prepare the pioneering Biographical Dictionary. It was purely Divine Will. I accepted His mandate in all humility but with my accustomed earnest enthusiasm.

With devout *praṇāms* to the 'fragrant gold' scholar, saint, sage, *vāggēyakāra* and *bhāgavata* of Tiruvaiyaru, Sri Tyagaraja, let me now reproduce a passage from his sublime

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

kriti in *rāga Gānavāridhi* which has absolute relevance to the completion of the *Garland* series and sing it adopting it for a while as my own, since I can lay claim to no better privilege than follow his footsteps :

"Munu nīvānaticchina
Panulāsakoni ne
Manasāraga nidhānamuga salpinānu,
Vara Tyagarajapta nanu = Daya jūcuta kidi vēḷara, Dāsarati"

[Oh, Son of Dasarata!
I have sedulously carried out Thy behest
With all my heart and steadfastness.
Now the time has come to bless me with Thy Grace.]

This ***Melodic Garland,*** the fifth and last volume in the *Garland* series, is placed at the holy feet of the Lord with prayers and salutations. *Sarvē saṅgita jana sukhinō bhavantu.*

March 20, 2000

'*Garland*' N. Rajagopalan

Swami Paramartananda, a respected spiritual saint of lavish scholarship writes:

"Music is melodious harmony. In harmony all differences resolve and there is experience of *advaita*, which is divine. In *Vēdic* traditions music is considered divine and is associated with the Lord. It is one of the spiritual *sādhanas* which can purify the mind. The Carnatic music tradition, originating from the Lord Himself, is a great tradition which has been preserved and perpetuated by great exponents. We should be grateful to all of them, but we do not know many of them and their lavish contribution. An admirable effort has been made by N. Rajagopalan to collect as much information as possible on such great contributors. Through the *Garland* series he has given to the present and the future generations a wealth of information regarding music, composers, vocalists, instrumentalists and bharatanatya artistes. I hope this valuable series of books will reach many people and help them discover the richness and glory of our admirable music tradition.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I **acknowledge** with gratitude the great-hearted encouragement given by - Sarvasri

T.S. Parthasarathy, Fellow, Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi and Emeritus Fellow, Department of Culture, Government of India, whose enlightened word of cheer has been a source of inspiration to me for long;

S. Rajam, a Sangita Kala Acharya, the only musician-artiste in the Carnatic music forum and a genial cavalier **with 'a heart'** and for all his contributions ;

B.V.K. Sastry of Bangalore, a Sangita Kalaratna, eminent author, critic & musicologist ;

Vainika P. Harihara Ayyar of Tiruvanantapuram, a totally dedicated soul who hails from a renowned musical family & with whom one can work wonders; and

V.P. Dhananjayan, an enlightened wizard in the field of dance with Shanta Dhananjayan and a gallant gentleman, ever ready to respond.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the magazines on music *Sruti, Shanmukha, Layamani Laya, Phoenix, etc.* & to The *Hindu, Indian Express, Dinamalar, Dinamani,* etc. and to the Music Academy, Kalakshetra and Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar Library, all at Chennai. I thank Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan for flying the first *Garland* to U.S.A. a decade back on his own in my absence and presenting it to Dr. Uma Roy and in effect releasing the book there!

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Uma Roy, former President, Carnatic Music Association of North America, New Jersey and Editor, *Sangeetham* for her unique support by lavish use of the material in the *Garlands* in *Sangeetham* for the benefit of musicians, *rasikas* and well-wishers there. Besides she sent me a cheque for $ five hundred which I allowed to lapse after informing her as even otherwise she had been doing meritorious work to spread Indian Arts in the New Continent with personal involvement and dedication. When she came to the December, 1996 Music Festival, she said that she would send a fresh cheque and that it should be accepted. She did send it and I gratefully accepted it. Let me record that it is **the sole gesture from an individual** apart from an apple with blessings from Sangita Kalanidhi D.K.Pattammal and a cup of coffee [as fragrant as his melodious music] from Sangita Kalacharya M.S. Anantaraman. M. Gopalakrishnan and R. Krishnamurti are also remembered now for their initial gestures extended a decade back when the project was in the womb stage. The *Garlands* are grateful to them all. I have to thank Dr. [Smt.] Sulochana Rajendran, Editor, *Shanmuikha,* Mumbai and other well-wishers for their understanding help in this musical yajña.

I record my appreciation of the help given by Kudanthai Sa. Venkataraman, scholar, researcher, astrologer, poet and Mg. Partner of M/s Chengacherial Printers, Chennai who got up the *Garlands* II to V in print.

I have to thank particularly S. Moni and V. Karthikeyan, distinguished former members of the Indian Administrative Service, for their kind solicitude and due recognition and appreciation of my absolute integrity and dedicated efficiency during my service. I am recording this now since I may not get another opportunity to do so.

(**Note :** A perfect gentleman, musical enthusiast and former Superintending Epigrapist, Government of India, H.K.Narasimhaswami who helped me in the second and third volumes had diluted himself happily in the *Paramātman.* I personally miss his lovable, genial presence very much.)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

This pioneering work

The Melodic Garland

[Biographical Dictionary of Composers, Musicians & Dancers - Book V]

is

DEDICATED

to

My parents

My beloved musical mother Lakshmi @ Chellammāl &
My scholar-saint father, Nāganātha Sāstrigal

My Gurus

Sangīta Kalānidhi Pāpanāsam Śivan
Salem Subbarama Bhāgavatar &
Trichy Sundar Rājan

And

My Patron Deities

Sri Parvatavardhini *samēta* Sri Rāmanāthaswāmy, Rāmēswaram
Sri Pūrṇa Puṣkalāmbika *samēta* Sri Hariharaputra Swāmy, Māndhai &
Sri Alarmēlumangā *samēta* Sri Venkatēswara Swāmy, Tirupati

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
1.	Preface	3
2.	Acknowledgment	14
3.	Dedication	15
4.	Table of contents	16
5.	List of illustrations	17
Part I		
I.	*Manõdharma* – The Eternal Fountain of Musical Inspiration ...	21
II.	Musical Pilgrimage – A far-sighted Integrating Factor ...	32
III.	The Dazzling Panorama of Chola Desa *Vāggēyakāras* ...	42
IV.	Lingering Appeal of Music – Travails of a *Rasika*	49
V.	Drama & Music – The Scenario in Karnataka	52
VI.	Music and Dance vs. Religion and Other Arts	61
VII.	Bharatanatyam	65
VIII.	Confusion in the Music Arena	86
IX.	*Guru, Guru, Guru, Namõ namah*	96
X.	Carnatic [Karnatic] Music – Etymology	106
XI.	Devotion is the Soul of Indian Music [Tyagaraja & Gandhiji] ...	110
XII.	Music, Art thou a villain?	113
XIII.	Devotional Music and Saintly Souls	117
Part II		
A.	Biographical Sketches of Artistes of Carnatic Music ...	137
B.	Biographical Sketches of Artistes of non-Carnatic Music systems	281
C.	Biographical Sketches of select Dancers of repute	301
Part III		
A.	Great Events, Memorable Performances and Unique Records ...	341
B.	Thoughts and Sayings, Aphorisms and Epigrams	365
C.	Interesting Notes	390
Part IV		
A.	Glossary	419
B.	Bibliography	424
C.	Addenda & Corrigenda [to earlier volumes]	427
D.	Index	429

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

List of Photographs and Illustrations

1. **Devi Saraswati** Page 133

2. Delectable, conjuring, enchanting portrayal of the ***Nava rasas*** brimming with dripping ***bhava-rasa*** by renowned dancer of international reputation, **V.P. Dhananjayan.** [The photo series convey the scintillating emotions which form the soul and substance of music, *bharatanatyam*, sculpture and painting . Thanks are due to the famed artiste and to Subab Govind who made the photos available.]

Nava Vida Bhavas - Bhava and Rasa

Eminent dance exponent, **V.P. Dhananjayan** was approached for pictures of portrayal of *bhavas.* That he is not only an artiste *par excellence* but is a specialist in communication management *in excelsis* became clear again when he promptly arranged with **Sri Subab Govind** and the photos arrived in *ati durita kala* [in the quickest time feasible] from the latter. The enchanting poses of the maestro are presented herein acknowledging the help of both **with thanks.**

i)	Shantha & Dhananjayan		Page 133
	Sthayi Bhava	**Rasa**	
ii)	*Rati* or Love or Admiration	Sringara	Page 133
iii)	*Kopam* or Anger	Roudram	Page 133
iv)	*Utsaham* or Energy or Valour	Veeram	Page 134
v)	*Bhayam* or Fear	Bhayanakam	Page 134
vi)	*Vismayam* or Astonishment	Adbhutam	Page 134
vii)	*Sokam* or Sorrow	Karuna	Page 134
viii)	*Hasyam* or Mirth	Hasyam	Page 135
ix)	Juguptsa or Dislike	Bibhatsam	Page 135
x)	Samam or Tranquility	Santham	Page 135

3. **Chitra Visweswaran** - A marval in Bharatanatyam Page 135

4. **Sangita Pithamaha Purandaradasa**

Some are born great, some become great and some have greatness thrust on them! To which of these three, the Sangita Pithamaha belongs? A colourful life of banker-turned-saint, a composer of lavish eminence and a codifier of rare vision, Purandaradasa is 'Fragrant Gold'. Two scenes of his refreshing life presented by Kalakshetra Artistes at Chennai find place here. Thanks are due to the Director, Rajaram.

i)	Purandaradasa's wife offering nose ring to a brahmin	Page 136
ii)	Purandaradasa with disciples	Page 136

5. **The Paramacharya** - the Musical Soul Page 337

6. **Swati Tirunal Maharajah, the Magnificent** Page 338

7. **Semmangudi Dr. Srinivasa Ayyar** Page 338

He commenced his unique, dynamic and remarkably successful musical career in 1926 and has also given a concert on the First January, 2000 to hoist his *Nada Seva* flag in the third millennium. Thousands of concerts, scores of honours and lavish praises have crowned his musical career. A sure case for a place in the Guinness Book of Records!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

8. **Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi** Page 339

9. **"The 'Tiger' and the *Puliyodharai*"** Page 339

The 'Tiger' Trio – Varadachariar, Krishnamachariar and Srinivasa Ayyangar – were pure musical souls *in exelcis*. They lived for music. Their lives are covered in the *Garlands* fully. The 'Tiger' was a scholarly, humane, witty musician and *guru* of the highest grade. Krishnamachariar, veena artiste, composer and choreographer of eminence was popularly called *Puliyodarai* [tamarind bath] presumably due to his addiction to that dish or his working in the kitchen. Simple exterior of both screens deep musicianship, scholarship and the fragrance of their music.

10. **Sangita Kalanidhi Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar**
– Courtesy: '*Sruti*' - Music in its innocent phases Page 340

11. **Travails and Tribulations of a *Rasika!*** Page 49

The fanatic music lover is miserable without his daily quota of classical art. [*Vide* **article in Part I**]

12. A typical scene portraying the precession of a deity along the main streets. Keshav of the 'Hindu' is in his delightful best. Absolutely true to the conjuring scene one can see in villages and towns.
– Courtesy: The '*Hindu*' Page 435

13. **Can Music wreck Love and separate lovers?** Cover Page 4

It can and had done it! In tamil epic of Ilango, *Silappadikaram* one of the finest tragedies of the world brimming with music and dance, lovers Kovalan and Madhavi are together for the Festival of Indira on the sands of Pumpuhar Seashore. In a mood of exhilaration playing the lute, he sings. She misconstrues it as addressed to some other lady-love of his. She takes over the lute to hit back and sings in like strain which he takes as faithlessness. **Eminent *vidwan* S. Rajam brings out the pathos of the scene** depicting Kovalan deserting a crest-fallen Madhavi clinging to the lute alone!

14. **God sings to save His *bhakta*!** Cover Page 4

Emanathan, a musician of fabulous fame, having put to shame every musician who had the guts to challenge him in a contest, arrives at the Pandian capital of Madurai to hoist his flag of success. The Court musician, a true devotee of Lord Somasundara, is diffident of his own success and prays. The Lord arrives in the garb of a wood-cutter, sings nonchalantly sitting on the pial of the house and tells Emanathan, who comes out of the house and enquires, that he is but a useless, discarded disciple of the Court Vidwan. **S. Rajam brings out this scene most absorbingly.** 'If the useless, discarded disciple could sing so rapturously, what should be the grade of the Vidwan's music', a perplexed Emanathan thinks and chooses to sneak out stealthily at night avoiding the contest!

15. **The Heart of Carnatic Music and Dance** Page 436 & 437

16. **Author Speaks, Dr. Nalli Kuppuswamy Chetty (a Prince among Connoisseurs) and Justice K.S. Bhakthavathsalam look on** Page 438

17. **Author, Dr. Nalli Kuppuswamy Chetty, Natarajan, Ex-Station Director, Doordarshan with musical papers** Page 438

18. **Organised medley around soulful melody** Page 439
– Courtesy: The '*Hindu*'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – I

Saptapaḍi: Application to the Confluence of *Saṅgita* and *Laya*:

Saptapaḍi is a vital, grandiloquent part of marriage rituals among hindus, absolutely modern in conception and legal in application, wherein the bridegroom declares and undertakes, charts out and registers a life partnership in mind, thought and action of both in the shape of pledges to the bride, the entire lot of kith and kin to witness! It exudes fragrant grace, virgin nobility, lofty morality, spiritual virtues and total civil legality and binds the two into one in a lifelong, enduring harmonious partnership. The very conception is magnificent and eloquent. Unfortunately the wonderful meaning is not understood by many.

In music, it is aptly said that *śruti* is mother and *laya* is father – *śruti mātā; laya pithā.* The one embelishes the other and both trek through concerts hand in hand like newly wed lovers conferring *hitham, śāntam, soukhyam* and *maṅgalam*. Is it not natural to assume and assert that **this *laya pithā* and *sruti mātā* to have taken the *saptapaḍi* pledges and that the seven steps have their origin in the *sapta swaras* attaining *sampūrṇatvam* – comprehensive completeness?**

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Here are the pledges taken. [By whom? Why entertain doubts? By the strong *Laya pithā*, the blushing *Śruti mātā* acknowledging it all!] How graceful are they! Once these pledges are followed with *bonafide* fidelity, soulful is the music.

'Having paced these seven steps [i.e., traversing the seven notes] with me, you shall be my inseparable comrade.

' I have gained your camaraderie and shall never part with it. [To part with *śruti suddham* is to invite mortal catastrophe indeed in a concert. It will be derailment!]

'You too shall not forsake the union – *śruti laya suddham* accord and alignment. We shall ever, remain bound together in divine unison and lead a 'prosperous life. [No wonder, during the percussion solo, *śruti mātā* retiring from focus, many among the audience too start conversing or leave for canteen since the thrill of enjoying the bondage [*dāmpatya*] is absent!]

'We shall do everything in absolute concert, shall love each other [*Śruti-laya suddham*].

'We shall live amicably together [in conformity with the injunctions of *lakṣaṇa* scriptures] to serve noble ends, enjoying good food [*sāhitya*], and good health [*suswara*, harmony and melody]; and

'We shall perform our duties [*lakṣya*] virtuously and happily together [to satisfy parents, elders, children, gods and *rasikas*.'

There is no gainsaying the fact that this melodic couple, *Laya* and *Śruti*, had positively taken this solemn pledge, as Carnatic Classical music would not have otherwise blossomed to scale such himalayan heights of absolute perfection and purity, harmony and melody in particular and, music in general, would not have prospered so majestically.

[Symbolically, the *laya pithā* has to show his consort the star Arundhati, wife of Sage Vasistha lauded for her chastity and devotion. Can there be any *laya pithā* with *śruti māthā* as accomplice who shudders to take this pledge at concerts due to misgivings on adhering to virtuosity!]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

R
927
RAJ-T

Chapter I

104320

Manōdharma

[The Eternal Fountain of Musical Inspiration]

'Such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air.'

R. Browning, *The Pied Piper*

In the sweet sphere of Indian classical music, *manōdharma* stands for inspired, spontaneous, extempore improvisation. It is the sheet anchor, *tour de force* of Indian music. It is an intellectual, individualistic adventure into what is actually unperceived and uncharted. It is well said that a few things can be explained but many things could only be experienced. This applies entirely to *manōdharma,* which is entirely a creative endeavour, a technical melodic kite-flying which may pervade musician's delineation of *rāga* [*sancāra*] or *tāna* and in the exposition of *kalpana swara* as well as solo [*tani āvartana*] percussion. The enormity of the scope to indent on *manōdharma* is indeed baffling depending on the cerebral and musical armoury of each artiste. It comes into play even while introducing variations called *saṅgatis*. It has neither fixity of shape, nor range, tempo, modulation, timbre, time-measure or any of the usual constraints. It is akin to the delightful, fascinating flights of the celestial bird, Garuda high up on the blue skies on a pleasant cloudless morn with all the beauteous variations it resorts to or indulges in. In short, in that sphere it is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient! Indian music, the oldest and perfected living musical system of the world, has been passed on through ages orally – *karṇa parampara*- and this naturally endowed, nay demanded of, both the teacher and the taught to rely on, resort to and invoke the vehicle of *manōdharma* to formulate, embellish, improve one's own rendition *vis-à-vis* others'. In the process, the practice, in sheer natural sequence, could have got welded into a system or process and named *manōdharma*. This accords and is in tune with the genius of the individualistic aptitudes of the Indian. While other civilized nations broadly went after material prosperity, India alone turned inwards in its unparalleled quest of the spiritual and the philosophical, making the best use of the *manōdharmic rāga*-based musical system to further the same.

Manōdharma is a capricious asset, which is prone to desert not infrequently even a maestro or the wizard. Thus one finds sometimes top musicians very stale and a novice scaling heights with uninhibited ease, totally unnatural and unexpected of him. It may put to shame great expectations and cast pre-planned, pre-rehearsed *sancāras, gamakas, brikas, jārus*, embellishments and other ornamental presentation totally out of bounds often; but

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

suddenly on other occasions, chooses to catapult the musician to dizzy heights he himself had never visualized nor could he comprehend. The titan and wizard Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar would not infrequently disappoint his fans since he was the most, ideal example of adroit musical versatility and grandeur wedded to wayward ways. When *manōdharma* chooses to stay away from an artiste, he is blissfully devoid of awareness of his conscious musical self, his mind stands divorced of all access to paths and links with improvisation and he finds himself fish out of water or like a storm-battered boat in oceanic wides as is beautifully described by Tyagaraja in *Nauka Caritra – Allakallola māyanamma* song in *rāga Sourāṣtram.* [How cyclonic storms devastated Sourashtra coast just three years back is recent history.] The mind, like a plane or automobile that has lost control, or a naughty, recalcitrant child, gets tense declining to rise and link up and grapple with elusive *manōdharmic* flights. The latter may either elude to the dismay and disappointment of all or suddenly invest him with the spirit – a sort of passing estrangement and subsequent reconciliation as in the field of *sṛiṅgāra.* In this context, the relationship between the musician and *manōdharma* is akin to a *virahōtkanthita* [the *nāyika* in the musician being nervously anxious on account of her lover not turning up as expected] or a *vipralabdha* [disappointed in not finding her lover at the appointed time or place]. The musician is virtually in the state of a *viyoga* [longing for the lover]. His mind cries inwardly '*Tikku teriyāda kāttil, unnai tēḍi, tēḍi alaindēnē*' [In the thick of direction-less jungle, I had been searching and searching for you.] A specimen, specific event is ideal to illustrate such a situation.

> [It was the last day of June 1999 and the venue was the crowded, famous mother of tennis courts, the Centre Court, Wimbledon. He was the much-hailed champion, who entered as a teenaged champion with a big bang fourteen years earlier; but this day, he bowed out beaten 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 by Patrick Rafter, who true to his name seemed to have carried the title off on a raft.
>
> 'This place made me who I am today. It is hard to compare any other feeling with going out on the Centre Court. **I wish I could have given a better match; but today I left my serve at home. I don't know where!', said he.**
>
> That was Boris Becker. The score shows how he was out of his elements.]

The same is the situation when a musician on the concert dais scouts and reconnoitres mentally to get at, and grapple with the elusive *manōdharma!* It may be a game of hide and seek in the ultimate analysis.

Manōdharma is not a licence to violate all norms and codes. Every right to freedom is hedged in by mandatory directive principles. Even so, this *manōdharma* too has to conform to aesthetic values and certain fundamental stipulations such as –

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Conforming to the *ārōhana* and the *avarōhana* of the *rāga* presently dealt with

Focussing on the *bhāva, chāya* and other essential elements of the *rāga* fully: and

Presenting the *sāhitya* [lyric] and *laya* in all their impressive and inherent grandeur and spirit of camaraderie and not in isolation in which case it should fail to evoke appreciation from audience.

Manōdharma underscores the grade and merit of the musician and of the concert. *Sans manōdharma,* there could be no classical music in India. It is *sine quo non,* the essential ingredient, the soul [*jīva*] of Indian music – Carnatic or Hindustani. Melody is primary and harmony follows in Indian music. It is harmony of and with melody. The Indian spirit is fundamentally individualistic and it is so with his music!

Manōdharmic venture in *rāga* delineation, *tāna* or *swara* exposition is colourfully compared to the flight of the sacred eagle with its majestic, casual, lazy, *couka kāla* flights on high skies, sudden sweeps, fickle twists, unexpected turns and swirls. The percussionist seeks to divine the next phase of the principal artiste to present his accompaniment in tune with it. Not infrequently he may fail and be unhappy over his inability to anticipate. He may fail due to the wilful dunkirking resorted to by the main artiste. [This was much in evidence in earlier decades when accompanists were at the mercy of titans who dictated terms and not infrequently there were undeclared. trials and competitions too...Episodes such as the one concerning Chittoor Subramania Pillai and Palghat Mani Ayyar are relevant in this connection. Then the principal vocalist or instrumentalist was not always a mere *primus inter pares*. A few were autocrats and tyrants confident of, secure in and never reluctant to lay hands on their rich armoury in *manōdharma.* The times gave scope for it and they had the self-confidence and challenging spirit, inputs and the guts to indulge in it! It is all to the weighted 'credit' side of *manōdharma* that equipped them so! But to the percussionist, this *manōdharma* in the hands of such a principal artiste was a weapon which can demolish and destroy him in the presence of *rasikas!*]

Manōdharma ensures variety, ever fresh presentation and freedom from the shackles of notation and pre-digested *ālāpana, swaras* and *tāna*. It would be well-nigh impossible for a classical artiste to give a rubber-stamp encore of any presentation as in other systems. Further the artiste is faced with a continuous inter-play of his own conscious and sub conscious minds vying with each other, trying to present yet another new, fresh and ostensibly a better one!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Manōdharma is given full play or a restricted role depending on the occasion, the nature of audience, the time of presentation and the time allotted. *Manōdharmic sanchārās, saṅgatis*, manipulative *swara* delineation, etc. leave a lasting and lingering impact on the *rasika*, who stands enslaved by their excellence and seeks to recapture and relive the experience any time after it! He is pleasantly haunted by conjuring visions of the alluring rendition once heard [and stored up in memory] even as a fond lover regales himself with the delectable joys shared with his or her lover as is most nonchalantly brought out by the saintly recluse, the Uthukadu bard, in song *Alai Pāyude* [*Kanada*] :

> ***'Oru tanitta vanattil anaittu uṇarcci koduttu magiḻttavā!'***
> [How in that isolated jungle, you fondly embraced me and injected ravishing joy!]

And national poet Subramania Bharati too endows a lady with many a happy recollection of baby Kṛiṣṇa planting a kiss so warm as of her husband! Superlative *manōdharmic* presentation lasts, lingers indelibly, ready to be recalled.

'A thousand thoughts lie within a man that he does not know till he takes on his pen to write', said William Makepeace Thackeray. Why to pen only? Veteran connoisseurs, critics and *rasikas* recall phases of thrilling, soul-stirring rendition of Maharajapuram, Ariyakudi, Musiri, T.N. Rajarathinam, Mali, Kittappa and M.S.Subbulakshmi as well as other veterans in scores and smile at vacance, not like a mentally sick person, but like a sage, philosopher, scientist or a lawyer at the flash of a productive, conjuring thought or solution. In spite of failure at successive concerts of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, I have seen connoisseurs flocking for one – yes, just one flash - of his once gallant lilting *manōdharmic* phrase, some sudden cloud-burst of pageantry, unbridled fireworks, cascades of intrusions into the deepest recesses of the grandeur of the musical jungle with its crowded tropical embellishments and incursions into the vast imagery and vistas of musical outer space which indeed has no limit. Laksman Krisnarao Pandit of the Gwalior Gharana says, 'The Indian musician, as he brings out the whole of his music *extempore*, must have knowledge of theory though not all the technical terms. **Our music is all *extempore* and creativity and the musician creates and weaves out even as he sings.** That creation reaches its acme of excellence if the audience is responsive enough. There should be rapport between the two.'

> 'Experience is not what happens to you; but what you make of what happens to you', said Aldous Huxley.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

In 1940, Sangita Kalanidhi T,V.Subba Rao declared,

> 'The number of musicians practising music is now a legion. But few of them could equal in depth, power or imagination the giants of old.'

This alleged fall is partly attributable to causes like urbanisation, appearance of notation system, proliferation of cassettes, the total disappearance of *gurukula* system, the short duration of collegiate and institutional courses in music which go to the conferment of qualifications in a quicker period of time and the practice of apprentices choosing preceptors according to their convenience, availability and adjustability for short, *ad hoc* durations and the commercial relationship between the two. The practice of listening, assimilation and intensive exercise or rehearsal has taken a back seat as could be seen from the sparse presence of musicians at concerts of other artistes. Books, notation, cassettes, radio or television have taken over instead.

The ancient *gurukula* and the later advent of *quasi-gurukula* as it obtained initially in Annamalai University and the old Central College of Carnatic Music, Chennai have materially yielded their primacy to a teaching system that lacks soul and is exotic. The *tour de force* of classical Indian music being melody, *karṇa parampara* and *manōdharma,* striking an individualistic style and mode of rendition could not normally find a congenial ground and strike rapport with the present mode of running music colleges. Individual students may scale the heights but it would be idle to expect it from many. Competent authorities would agree with **Raghava R. Menon** when he says :

> 'The principles of the art taught in a classroom format in the style of the educational system was spreading rapidly across the country...This effort was described by Panditji as a way out for music to create hundreds of Kansens out of students, rather than Tansens!'

There are colleges galore in music but most of them fail to present star performers as the old system was able to. A *guru* may teach by example or precept the *sisya* to cross the river and reach the other bank but it is left to the genius of the latter to proceed, explore further and consolidate his art. The spirit of Ekalavya, Arjuna, Karna, Shivaji, Bharati and such others should inspire and take him over. The collegiate atmosphere perhaps lacks or lags behind in instilling this characteristic in the pupil. **B.R. Keshavamurti** observes :

> 'There is no *siddhi* in music. It is only *sādhana* all the way. A musician must practise and aim towards an ideal. A good student is like a spotless mirror on which the *guru* sees a pleasant face while a bad student is like a cracked mirror presenting distorted images.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The jeweller in the *guru* endeavours to equip the student with as much finesse and polish as he is capable of but the further exploration is left to the genius of the latter. It is here the student has to rely on and marshal *manödharma* to equip and draw out of his musical armoury and present ever-fresh sparklers. While holding fast and close to the essentials of the foundation he inherited like the baby monkey, he proceeds to build edifices of his own according to his genius drawing copiously from the reservoir of his own *manōdharma,* which is comprehensive enough to take on intuition, initiative, spontaneity, adventure and a cavalier spirit. The system points out the *mārga;* it is the student who does the reconnoitre and takes on the melodic journey. 'In the scholastic system of teaching', says Raghava Menon,' music is treated as though it were a mere science, a matter merely of arithmetic, of fractions and time intervals. This, it is not.'

In *Mahābhārata,* Karna suppressed misgivings about his birth solely to satisfy his hunger to learn archery from the mighty *guru*, Parasurama. Vasudevacharya of Mysore, in a bid to hear the uninhibited *manōdharmic* early morn violin practice of the great maestro Tirukkodikaval Kṛṣṇa Ayyar, sat beneath the outer window opening out on the street at the latter's house and in the attempt had the unfortunate experience of taking on himself the spittle of the maestro who was unaware of the boy hiding himself outside the window to satisfy his passionate craving to hear how the maestro practises, learn and imbibe it all ; there was little room for any other thought. And the violin virtuoso deeply regretted [not like our V.I.Ps issuing statements soon after every disaster] his mistake and more than compensated the unintended harm and atoned for it by presenting a special play to satisfy the young yearning innocent heart before him! That was the measure of the culture of artistes [then?]. It was so as art was practised for the sake of art. Ravi Shankar, Chowdiah, Konerirajapuram and such other maestros had indeed pocketed hardships, sufferings and even insults in their bid to acquire, develop and set aglow the scarce product, the hidden flame of *manōdharma*! Once the flame was lit up, they found the whole world literally at their feet! And deservedly so! Each of them earned it all and became models of *manōdharmic* presentation, trail-blazers, trend-setters and pioneers in their respective fields.

To a genius, *manōdharma* presents bunches or clusters of *sanchāras* and *saṅgatis*- literally a flood of alternatives out of which he has to, nay, he struggles to sort out, pick and choose even as the concert is on. Indian music leaves it to the artiste to exercise his right to select, discard, postpone in part or the whole. In this he is almost a despot, and at the worst, a constitutional king enjoying divine rights as of old. This is the inherent strength of Indian music, its uniqueness and monopoly!

It is indeed a remarkable specimen of the democratic spirit pervading the field of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Indian music absolutely free from regimentation! The hindu chooses his individual deity, philosophy, method of worship and customs and manners. Even so, as a musician the Indian chooses the nature, content, method, shape and every ingredient of his music subject to the overall criteria.

Some *gurus* invest their students with a certain quality of special style [*bani*], captivating rendition, spirit of adventure, etc. Eminent *gurus* are probably born and not made. This applies to musicians too? **Mysore Vasudevacharya** has recorded how Patnam Subramania Ayyar coached him.

> 'Vasu, do not think I am not aware of your desire to learn. Do not feel that you have spent all your time in vain. The benefit of careful and constant listening can be hardly exaggerated. I had taken you around the corridors of the temple [of music] and you have listened to my rendition at home and at concerts. All that remains to be done is to take you to the *sanctum sanctorum* and show the *mūla vigraha* and that I will do tomorrow.'

But these are days of one-day [limited overs] matches both in cricket and the marital arena. It is rather doubtful whether the modern student who pays a [small or hefty] tuition fee would wait to be taken around the inner and outer *praharas* and perhaps innermost corridors too and wait for the sweet will of the *guru* to take him into the *sanctum!*

On the vital relevance for the pupil to develop his *manōdharmic* potential and capabilities the world famous **Yehudi Menuehin** averred:

> 'A lesson was an inspiration, not a stage reached in the course of instruction. It was the making of music. What I received was the note transformed into vital message, the phrase given shape and meaning, the structure of music made vivid.'

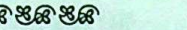
Constant exposure to the rendition of the eminent in music bestows practical knowledge of styles, modes of presentation, tempo, etc and how improvisation of *saṅgatis, sanchāras, gamakas, lakṣya* v.*lakṣana* and such other essentials are canvassed and presented. To develop this *manōdharmic* faculty, the student performs a virtual *yajña* by constant hearing, practice and rehearsals to grab and acquire the *jïva* [soul] of that *manōdharma.* Once he graduates in this, he enters the *garbhagriha* of the divine music of this land.

Quite soon, his listeners become *rasikas* with their '*oho- oho, tsu- tsu, āhā-hā, bēsh- bēsh* and *sabhāsh- sabhāsh'*, etc. indicating fresh, exulting, enticing, exhilarating

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and elevating *manōdharmic* musical output. Indeed, it is on such occasions, there ensues an *adwaitic* unity and identity of emotions and rapport between the musician and his *rasikas*. Greater the centripetal *bhāva*-laden *manōdharmic* music, greater is the relish and joy and the success of the concert.



Manōdharma pervades not only vocal or instrumental music or percussion but it extends to other arts as well. In percussion one sees devilish permutations and combinations, fractions and formulations which would have gladdened the hearts of the mathematics prodigy Ramanujam and the Nobel Laureate, Sir C.V. Raman. In dance, delectable *abhinaya, adavus* and the like are spun out, amazingly fresh with each dancer of repute. A simple theme or thought like *Teruvil varāno* is sufficient to portray and project scores of *bhāva-rasa*-laden portrayals [*adavus*] that enchant and are thought-provoking. It is to the immense credit of the Indian genius, its system and its original architects of vision that this unique purely intellectual, artistic and multi-dimensional vital soul or *jīva* called *manōdharma* should have been made the *tour de force* of arts in India.

Dr.V.K.Narayana Menon had observed,

> 'The serious classical music forms of Europe today rarely use improvisation. Johan Sebastian Bach was a great improviser on the organs in the churches of Leipzig. Beethoven was known as an improviser and in relatively recent days, Lizzt. All this has disappeared in modern music except in Jazz. The fact is that the structure that sophisticated harmony demanded could not be left to the liberties of virtuoso performers. In purely melodic systems like ours, it is the subtlety and the complexity of the melodic line that lead to the development of rhythms of equal sophistication to match them and support them.'

Some thoughts on *saṅgati* and *sanchāra,* which provide the vista for, and are vital elements of, *manōdharmic* music, may perhaps be relevant. They help to highlight, purvey *in extenso,* express diverse emotions and *bhāvas* in different shades from different angles. They bring out hidden, underlying emotions with ornamentation and ideas in all their lurid colours and virgin beauty. They help to portray varying, alternative embellishments as sweet intellectual menu helping the listener to regale himself, enjoy the inherent lyrical and melodic artistry, *bhāvas* and *rasas*. The *vidwat* and felicity of voice of some help irrepressible, interminable excursions of *saṅgatis*. Sometimes the sheer profusion of *saṅgatis* robs the music of its grace. The limit, the optimum is also vital to commend acceptance. The fragrance and beauty of the *sāhitya, rāga, laya, swara,* etc are artistically and expressively spun out, the decorator, the jeweller and the painter and the dancer in the musician joining

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

hands. Truly one enjoys where *manōdharma* reigns and rules. *Sans manōdharma*, music lacks soul and appeal.

New *rāgas* are presented off and on. Of course, the soul and content of all *rāgas* are embedded in the unfathomable ocean of melody, the skeletal outline and shape of which are outlined in the *Mēḷakarta* Scheme. The artiste, called creator, inventor or detector, frames the shape, mould, stature, content, appeal and invests it *with jīva* and *bhāva* and it is given a name [*namakaraṇa*]. It is an exercise of *manōdharma.* There were some heated exchanges of opinion in this field concerning Dr. Balamurali Krishna and Veena Balachander.

That apart, the art of framing a **new *rāga*** and a **new *tāla*** for a **new song composed *extempore*** on the spot in a *mēla rāga* suggested on the spot on December 6, 1982 at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, was successfully demonstrated to the delight of musicians and *rasikas* by the eminent, multifaceted Dr. Balamurali Krishna. The dramatic incident narrated by B.V.K.Sastry is briefly resurrected here as it is a profound, perfect as well as a comprehensive application of, exercise and a lesson in *manōdharma.*

Dr. Balamurali Krishna : 'Please give me the *ārōhana* and *avarōhana* of any *mēla* and specify the *mēla* name.'

> [None offered a reply till Veena Doreswamy Iyengar rose up and said SRGMPMDS = SNDPMGRS, a *janya* of *Harikāmbhōji.*]
>
> [The doctor commenced humming to himself and was catching up in his mind with the new *rāga* and giving it a shape, to which he would be the Creator [Brhma]. The august audience in the packed hall lay in hushed silence waiting with anxiety amidst tension.]

Then he presented the delineation of a new *rāga,* which he named *DORE* in honour of Doreswamy Iyengar who suggested the initial *mēla* combination out of which a new *rāga* was to be spun out. Then he created a new *tāla* and named it *Trimukhi* [modelled after *Ādi tāla* with nineteen *mātras*, wherein each beat of hand was of three *mātra* duration.] With *Dore* as *mātā* [mother] and *Trimukhi* as *pithā* [father], he brought out the child, the new *sāhitya* in telugu – *Manaku Vachinade Swatantryamu* highlighting the wide gap between preaching and practice in India. Later a kannada version was immediately got up with the help of a scholar for the same lyric. And he declared before the amazed, over-awed audience sitting like statues wonder-struck:

> "Gentlemen, you have all witnessed the creations!
> I have not brought any book
> Nor have I consulted any as you saw."

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

It was no magic nor was it a myth. No jugglery either. It was presented to the Samaja in an open demonstration before the cream of musicians and music-lovers- the gift of *manōdharmic* exercise creating a new *rāga*, a new *tāla* and a fresh composition all *extempore*. It was a magnificent, matchless exhibition of absolute mastery in *lakṣana* and *lakṣya* born out of assurance, competence, mastery and self-knowledge.

So, Cultivate *manōdharma* and follow the counsel of Sage Tyagaraja,

Rāga sudha rasa ; panamu jesi
(Drink the nectar of *rāga* and be blessed)

Tail-piece : Here is a specimen of how a rich *manōdharmic* mind cannot reproduce a rubber-stamp copy of anything sung earlier even during a practice session. Mani Krishnaswamy, a sangita kalanidhi, clarified to the *Hindu* thus :

"We would be attending all the classes at Kalakshetra. Tiger Varadachariar, Mysore Vasudevacharya and Budalur Krishnamurti Sastrigal had their own methods. Budalur would take up a *kīrtana* and make us repeat the *saṅgatis* one by one. If the next day we failed to sing properly he would fly into rages and take the hell out of the students. More difficult was Tiger. He would sing and as he sang, we had to note down roughly the *saṅgatis* and memorise them. But the next day when we sang before him, he would exclaim, 'This is not the way, I taught you' and sing again for us. But it would be totally different! It would be as dictated by his *manōdharma* then! What a pervasive *manōdharma* he enjoyed!'

No wonder Tiger was a '**Tiger**'

Sangita Kala Acharya T.S. Parthasarathy, Fellow, Sangeet Natak Akademy and Emeritus Fellow, Department of Culture, Government of India, perused the above and his **expert comments** are reproduced below :

"Strangely enough, the term '*Manōdharma*', to mean creativity or extemporization in music, does not appear to figure in any music treatise nor in any Sanskrit dictionary. Prof. Sambamurthy has used the term in his *Dictionary of South Indian Music and*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Musicians to mean *Manōdharma Saṅgita* or 'Off-hand creation of a musician's own fertile imagination'. He has given details of *manōdharma saṅgita* like *rāga ālāpana*, *madhyama kāla* or *tāna, pallavi* exposition, *swara kalpana* and *neraval*.

"To my knowledge, this article on *manōdharma* to mean 'the eternal fountain of musical inspiration' is the longest ever written on the subject and proves the *manōdharma* of N. Rajagopalan. Rajagopalan's article is an eye-opener and I am happy that it will find a place in the fifth volume, the *Melodic Garland.*

"I have been listening to Karnatic music for the past seventy years and without meaning the slightest disrespect to any musician , I can say that I found genuine *Manōdharma* in only three of them, viz.,

Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer,
T.N. Rajarathinam Pillai and
Flute T.R. Mahalingam.

Viswanatha Iyer never practised at home and till he sat on the dais and adjusted the *sruti*, he had no idea of what he was going to sing. This applies to the other two maestros as well. *Rasikas* used to request Maharajapuram to sing a particular *kriti*, and he would sing the *rāga* but some other *kriti*. He used to explain later that **he was in a mood** to sing that particular *kriti*. It was difficult to explain this trait in him. At his concerts, not infrequently, he would be seen suddenly twisting shirt sleeves playing with his shirt buttons. They were symbolic of his mind getting seized of or in tune with *manōdharmic* flights and one would immediately find him spurting into divine music. He would then be in some sort of a musical trance in *manōdharmic* world.

Mali once played *Varāli* [*rāga*] and brought tears in the eyes of his listeners but he never went beyond the top *shadja*.

Rajarathinam's caprices are too well-known to be elaborated here. Once he took the nagaswaram in his hands, he was in a world of his own."

Sikkavane

Escapes from the chaser, wayward pranks and frolics with women going to fetch water, catches their breasts ; embracing them while asleep, declares, 'I am Purandara Vittala' holding their left hands...

–Purandara dāsar

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter II

Musical Pilgrimage

[A Far-sighted Integrating Factor]

General :

Our ancients were profoundly aware of the possibility of problems surfacing in a country as vast as Bharat, with its rich tropical and geographical potential to grow into a heavily populated country of teaming millions, speaking diverse dialects and following diverse customs and manners due to local and regional causes and constraints. Blest and inspired by their far-sighted vision, they considered that specific safeguards were vital to guard against fissiparous and centrifugal forces emerging and destroying the well-knit national and social fabric that have withstood the challenges of many a millennium. Wherever they be and whatever be their social customs and habits, the people stood well moulded and integrated into a single monolith of a **nation called the Bharat and later India** with significantly common features, codes of conduct, aspirations and beliefs, customs and manners, well cemented and bound together for well over five millennia psychologically, spiritually and emotionally with a common religion ***sans*** regimentation, centralization, violent enforcement of tenets and proselytism, but with a liberal outlook and absolute freedom of worship, customs and practices that should be the envy of most other countries, if viewed without prejudice.

To ensure and sustain this national concept, consensus, conscience and national integrity, pilgrimage came to be prescribed as an essential duty of citizens. To ensure that this religious perambulation and spiritual scouting are well-directed and fruitful, four major divine abodes [*dhamas*] of God were very thoughtfully located at the farthest corners [outposts] of the country - significantly Kēdarnath, Jagannath, Ramnath and Somnath! The strange but honest, faithful and basic belief has been that those of the North do pay a visit to Rameśwaram at the tip of far South to secure religious benediction and salvation while those in the South thought so *vis a vis* Varanaśi with a bath in the Ganges and Puri in the North! So millions have been perpetually on the move till this day either on foot or otherwise across the country on pilgrimage chanting *slokas* or doing *bhajans* all the while from time immemorial to sustain and strengthen the common bonds, goal and integrated outlook, the unassailable faith and sense of belonging to Bharat and continuously renewing

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the already cemented mosaic of a single impregnable, well-knit nation.

The Hindu has a particular congenital passion for rivers and worships them as goddesses out of sheer gratitude and veneration for the resplendent succour they provide. Among the hundreds of rivers, the Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and the Cauvery have been consciously chosen for special veneration. Why? The geographical spread of the selected rivers is remarkably significant and speaks for itself. One can see the soul and the lifeline of the body of the map of India by drawing the rivers alone. Rustic or *panḍit*, people in far-flung villages from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and the Punjab to Bengal who might or might not have stepped out of their areas may be seen chanting during their daily ablutions:

'Gangēca Yamunëcaiva Gōdāvari Saraswati
Narmada Sindhu Cauvery jalēsmin sannidhim kuru'.

As a Hindu, he chants the names of the holy rivers of the country every day. Do they ever recite the names of the Amazon, the Nile, the Danube or the River of Sorrow?

This has been prescribed and inculcated in the minds of all to keep in perpetual focus the integral unity of the nation. If the four celestial homes [*dhamas*] mentioned above pointed to the outposts of the nation, the rivers identified its life-sustaining arterial waterways! Numerous holy places studded along the length and breadth of the country covering far-flung corners and adorned with temples, tall towers and massive *maṇḍapams* beaming with divine architectural and sculptural beauty, elegance and splendour, and endowed with festivals and regular services have been thoughtfully identified inter and intra regions to navigate people from local moorings to such centres to feel the pulse of common bondage. Visits to temples, attendance during *pūjas* and participation in festivals were not mere religious observances but provided occasions for social and congregational exchanges, developing community consciousness and recreation as well as for serving the allied, but unstressed, need for economic well-being. People of diverse social, economic and even religious grades brush shoulders with each other leading to closer understanding of common features, ideals and aspirations. **These religious edifices and festivals have in-built economic significance and high potential too as they help production and marketing, trade and commerce, holding of fairs, promoting arts and crafts and providing employment.** Thus many of the apparently innocuous religious and social observances do have multi-dimensional purposes to energize development and nation building! Some people miss the magnificent and massive benefits that accrue from all these and apparently get obsessed with petty details unfortunately for reasons not fair or easily discernible.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were made to trek not only up to the far south but even beyond not for fun but to **assert** the fundamental unity of the country that is Bharat in unequivocal terms and **record the fact**. The Kurukshetra War enlists and enumerates kings and kingdoms only to re-emphasize and **record** the basic geographical unity of the hindu nation. Sage Agastya was advised to go to the far south to avoid the tilt of Bharat and save the nation because the whole land was entirely India's. *Aswamēdha yāgas* were conducted to assert and announce the unitary concept. Did any of the horses stray into modern Iran or Tibet? **They too knew the limits!** The hindu King of Nepal in the himalayan ranges is given special privileges in the matter of worship at the temple of Rameswaram in the south. Maharashtrians officiate as priests at the latter temple while Nambudiris of the South are given the privilege to officiate likewise in the northernmost temple.

Every ceremony or ritual is commenced with a *sankalpa* specifically invoking and asserting the citizenship of the *karta*, the performer, that he is a citizen of Bharat,

'*Jambūdvīpē, Bhārata varṣē, Bharatakkaṇḍē...*'

And it is repeated *ad infinitum,* lest doubts should creep in! And the relevance of all these fail to get due appreciation in the dismal context of dismal, decrepit politics.

Visits to the multitudes of holy places and baths in holy rivers are held out as mandatory to earn the Grace of God and for the welfare of citizens and are being observed with faith and fortitude all through several millennia. That is why Bharat has remained and continues to survive with magical, vibrant stamina as **a single nation** in spite of external aggression, political fragmentation, vicissitudes, alien domination and internal animosity against unity. When a person said that he was a Hindu, not only his religion was revealed but his nationality and his country too got manifested. It was magnificently so till recently and is so in respect of the bulk of the people yet. That is the loftiness of the vision of our seers and sages! A large segment of the population trace their ancestor to one of the seers like Bhäradwaja, or Kousika, irrespective of their residence in particular parts of the country. Thus one of the same *gōtra* in Kashmir is seen as a distant cousin of another in distant Kanyakumari from time immemorial. Hindu Law as it stood before amendments restricted marriages, etc among spouses of the same *gōtra* up to prescribed degrees even though the bridal candidates hailed from different parts!.

Common heritage, undivided passion for the native land, its rivers, temples and deities [*sthala, mūrti, tīrtha*] and such other unalterable factors have kept this wonderful land, hailed as *Punyabhūmi* and *Dharmabhūmi*, emotionally, culturally and spiritually a single integrated nation, a single entity though time had stripped it of many parts. Sri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Candraśekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi asserted that Bharat extended from Afghanistan to Cambodia – of course, unfortunately once! It was to continuously recognize and consistently assert the fundamental unity and integrity of this nation that pilgrimage was taken as a mandatory religious duty and observance all along. If Adi Sankara walked across the country and established *maths* to propagate *dharma, Sri* Candraśekharendra Saraswati Swamigal and his predecessors trekked the length and breadth of the country **on foot** to spread the message of *dharma*. Vinobhaji did the same to secure lands for the poor [*bhūdan*]!

[Note : The spirit of *pādayātra* would seem to be not dead as one sees some VIPs, in an act of cruel joke, doing it but on cars on election eve calling it *pādayātra*!]

Musical Pilgrimage

Music has been the chosen, endearing handmaid of religion and spiritual endeavours. The Indian is congenitally and primarily religious. Religion and music run in his veins. Music has been found the best medium for propagation and publicity in the context of the facts that the life of an Indian is saturated with music from birth to death and music pervades all functions and festivals, political, social or religious. Mahakayi Subramania Bharati who knew the pulse of the nation with immaculate precision assesses it thus :

> ***'Gānattilē amudhāga nirainda***
> ***'Kavidaiyile uyar nādu – Engal Bhārata Nādu!'***
> [**Our** country, Bharat, is celebrated for its lyrics,
> Rich with the juicy elixir of music.]

Bharati was eminently qualified to give this verdict as he was not only a man possessed of sage vision and profound insight, but was deeply committed to the heritage and legacy of India and was a patriot-composer with progressive views far ahead of his time and a musicologist *par excellence*. Many like Kṣetrajña, Narayana Tirtha and Sarngadeva have made musical pilgrimages. *Bhāgavatas* flourished everywhere. Just a few decades back, countless venerable men and women were seen in the flush hours of the morn going round temples and streets in congregation singing aloud the graces of God for the welfare and uplift of the universal community. Pre-historic *Sāma Vēda* gave the orientation and impetus to music. Successive devotional seers and saints nurtured the belief with earnest faith that Gods are pleased and are more fruitfully propitiated when approached with music. Muthuswami Diksitar hails Goddess as *Bhāva Rāga Tāla Mōdini, Rāga Swarūpini* and such other musical salutations. *Soundarya Lahari* and other hymns invoke goddesses and gods as the *swarūpa* and *rasika* of music. Apostles of Siva and Viṣṇu, composers and singers have delighted themselves and the country with countless songs of celestial fragrance

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and eternal appeal. India is supremely rich in devotional music of unsurpassed lyrical and prosodic beauties.

The **Prince of Musical Pilgrimage** is positively Muthuswamy Dikṣitar, the youngest of the Classical Carnatic Trinity, [born at Tiruvarur on March 25, 1775 and slipped into eternity at Ettayapuram on April 26, 1835]. His was a life of absolute musical pilgrimage – *saṅgita kṣētrādana* - from youth to the end. It was a remarkable feature of his life that he applied his eminence in scholarship, eloquence in music and dedication to spiritual pursuits to impregnate and enrich art, astrology, astronomy and travelogue, *bhakti* enveloping them all in a measure that has indeed few parallels. Most beautifully he wove the mandate on pilgrimage into the graceful web and fabric of the finest of fine arts, viz., melodic music as few had done. He was fully equipped to achieve this, being an erudite scholar, linguist, musicologist, *vainika-gāyaka*, astrologer, *vāggēyakāra* and all wedded to the *niṣkāma karma* of musical pilgrimage. The other two of the Trinity did not undertake such extensive pilgrimages.

It is to be kept in view that in Dikṣitar's days, population was sparse, communications were difficult, and much of the travel had to be on foot through jungles, hills and dales, by bridle-paths and country cart-tracks wherever they had existed! And braving all the handicaps, if Muthuswami Dikṣitar had Bharat *Darśana*, it speaks volumes of his stubborn faith and indomitable commitment to ethereal values. Hereward, the Wake, was more at home on his horseback, it was said. Even so, it could be said that Diksitar was at home in his pilgrimages from Nepal to the South visiting the countless *sthalas, mūrtis* and *tīrthas.* The under-currents of absolute faith in the nation, nationality and nationhood were strong then and have continued though delicately poised. If these were not there, he would have and should have visited some alien country too. He did not and others of his tribe too did not. That is itself the query and the answer. He was a true *kṣetrajña*. Being a true *adwaitin*, he had the glorious example of the great preceptor Sri Sankaracharya before him.

To arrest his congenital inclinations to fly out of his native nest on musical pilgrimages and clip his wings, he was wedded to two girls but perhaps the peripatetic *vāggēyakāra* took them to be just *saṅgita* and *sāhitya* - aids in live forms to pursue his mission relentlessly. Wherever they had followed, they were perhaps auxiliary crusaders enabling the success of his mission. His connotation of *samsāra* probably was what national poet, Subramania Bharati later on elaborated, viz.,

> '*Kākkai kuruvi eṅgal jāti, kadalum, malaiyum eṅgaḷ koottam.*'
> [Crow and sparrow are of our caste; sea and mountain are of our tribe.]

Were the pilgrimages of Dikṣitar *sakāma* or *niṣkāma* is a relevant issue. There was nothing earthy in any of his dealings and it is an undeniable fact that he gathered absolutely

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

nothing that was material in all his peregrinations. Presumably he started out every time with his *madisanji* [fibre bag] containing just his extra clothes, *pūja* materials and a handful of sacred ash [*vibhūti*]. And he returned safe and true with them intact and, of course, with his spouses as and when they had accompanied. [This type of *kṣētrādana* economics is difficult for the modern world to stomach and digest. But facts are unfortunately incontrovertible.]

The child runs for the warmth of the bosom of its mother. The calf runs after its mother! **[Incidentally, it is a wonder that animal cubs or kids are rarely seen running after their dads? Perhaps it is yet another indication of their not being blest with *jñāna* – wisdom, as normally fathers alone are said to confer wisdom.]** The elephant cub draws comfort standing beneath the bulky body of its mother supported by pillar-like legs rooted to the earth in a rectangle! The river commits *harakiri* in rushing towards the ocean and dissolving itself! The tiny seed finds out some hole to sprout out of darkness in search of sunlight! Even so, *jīvātma* is on perpetual endeavour to merge in the *Paramātman*! All that Diksitar did was only this, to go back to and reach his permanent home and lose and dilute himself in Eternity. Surely this is robust *niṣkāma*.

Bharatiya Women :

Having touched on the role of the wives of Dikṣitar, a detour on the topic of Indian women at this stage is pardonable. In India, religion, tradition and custom had inculcated the virtuous habit of turning to the supreme symbol of *dharmic* womanhood, Sita of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a model woman symbolizing all that is best and noble, blest with soundness of judgment, indignation at wrongs, reverence to elders and comforting and courteous to spouse. Mukunda Pati Tripathi Ratnamaliya pays this tribute:

> 'In fine, the character of Sita is highly fascinating and worth imitating. She is the paragon of domestic virtues. Her behaviour is exemplary even in adverse circumstances of life. She is grand and great in her fortune; she is far greater in her dire misfortunes.'

Indian women in general and particularly those wedded to religious, spiritual and scholarly men of eminence have been but mini versions of Sita. The misfortune of this *Punyabhūmi* is that there was only one Valmiki and only one Vyasa. How one wishes to get glimpses of the lives of the wives of the Carnatic Trinity! They remained *alter egos* or shadows of their cerebral spouses, acting as friend, philosopher and guide in all the spiritual, domestic and social spheres demanding little for themselves, absolutely self-effacing. They

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

lived for the eminence of their spouses and the word 'I' had not presumably come up at all across their robust minds. The fame and eminence of their spouses were their aim and ambition, achievement and attainment and were enough to invest their lives with meaningful fulfilment, joy and contentment. Their sober wishes had never learnt to stray; large was their bounty and souls sincere. They gave all they had to their spouses and gained from them in return a kindly nod, a warm tear and from Heaven what they wished for! It was not sacrifice by canons of Hinduism but was coparcenary; perhaps it was surrender to a common goal and participatory endeavour, an *yajña.* Is not the daily life of a true hindu a running *yajña*? Sure, it was so and continues to be so in many a home still!.

There have been occasional exceptions as in the case of Jayadeva who loved his artistic wife so dearly that he chose to immortalize her in his Song Celestial *Gita Govinda.* The earliest moralizer, the magnificent Tiruvalluvar had enjoyed this involved cooperation, participatory commitment and self-effacement of his beloved spouse. And when she pre-deceased him, what a himalayan loss it was to him could be gleaned from the throbbing threnody which sums up her life.

"Aḍisirkkiniyālē, anbuḍaiyālē, pati śortavarāda pāvāi!
Aḍivaruḍi, pintūngi, mun eḷum pēdhāi; nī podhiyo en tūngum en kaṇ ini."

She had looked after her spouse who was to transcend the limitations of time and space with solicitude, understanding and faith and it is seen that she was of exceptional devotion, providing appropriate food, love, respect, physical availability as friend, philosopher and guide, a source of inspiration. Likewise in a song in *rāga Pantuvarāli,* the Karnataka Sangita Pithamaha, Purandaradasa pays a glowing tribute to his wife who revealed to him the light of self-realization and the royal path to glory. This has been so with most of the homes all along! It was an incontrovertible fact.

Sri Nadananda alias Yatindra Chidambaranatha Yogi, who had earlier blessed father Ramaswami Dikṣitar, came again and [like Sage Viswamitra in the *Rāmāyaṇa*], took with him young Muthuswami Dikṣitar and his wives to Benares in what was to be the first lap of a life-long journey that was to find culmination at Ettayapuram. This early journey helped him to receive *Sri Vidya Mahāṣōḍasākṣari Mahāmantra upadēśa*, learn hindustani music and, above all, to get an intense exposure to the magnificent majesty of the nation, its immortal religion and ancient culture during the five-year sojourn and *gurukulavāsa* at Benares. He might have then made local tours too.

He should have returned to Tiruvarur by 1802 C.E. via Manali and Tiruttani. Father

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

expired in 1817 and brother Baluswami Dikṣitar who was singing with brother Chinnaswami Dikṣitar as duo died in 1823. Muthuswami Dikṣitar should have been with the family during the period or probably had shifted to Thanjavur during the time to teach the Thanjavur Quartette, to teach Subbaraya Sastri, son of Syama Sastri and perhaps a few others, and to carry on exchanges with Tyagaraja, Syama Sastri and other musical celebrities as Thanjavur was then the haven of intellectuals [including musical].

Perhaps he had then made local pilgrimages. The stay at Thanjavur during 1823-1827 gains credence as the last of the Quartette, Vadivelu [b.1810] would have been just of the age to take to advanced training in music. There is a version that the *varnam, Sāmi ninnekōri* of Ramaswamy Dikṣitar was reconstructed jointly with the other two of the Trinity. That might have been accomplished then. This golden period should have ended in 1827 when Sastri expired in tune with his song *Dēvi brōva samayamidē.* Dikṣitar's father and the surviving brother were not there to peg him down to the place. Were his wives too not alive?

[Alas, many a great lady wedded to eminent spouses in Bharat had died young due to unlimited fasting, severe penance and harsh lives, unhonoured, unwept and unsung. Though it had been hailed as *māngalya bhāgya*, it was perhaps highly an unfortunate feature, a national loss without doubt if not entirely a *dharmic* and intellectual tragedy.]

The *kṣētrajña*, musical ambassador of gods and intellectual *yōgi,* resumed his *pādayātra*. The period 1827-1835 should have witnessed intensive visits to far-flung holy places – more particularly in the north- as he was presumably free from *samsāra bandha* - family or mundane encumbrances, [virtually free but for a small package of essentials, the inseparable spare set of dhoti, *vibhūti*, a tumbler and spoon to do his daily rites and the *pūja* articles as mentioned above]. This period should have seen his intensive pilgrimages since on his return, the surviving brother too was not at home and he had to go in search of him. His absence from home should have been long and far away as he was ignorant even of his whereabouts. After Benares, it is Rameśwaram for a pilgrim. Dikṣitar too went to Rameśwaram and paid his musical tribute to the Lord with the song *Rāmanātham Bhajēham* [*Pantuvarāli*]. Therefrom he went on the last leg of his life of pilgrimage to Ettayapuram. Deepavali, 1835 saw his soul immortalized amidst the singing of *Meenalōcani pāsamōcani* [*Pūrvikalyāni*].

Thus 1795-1801 and 1802-1817 might have seen pilgrimages of Dikṣitar around Benares and Tiruvarur respectively. 1823-1827 likewise should have seen him in temples

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

in Thanjavur Belt. The distant *kṣetras, mūrtis* and *tīrthas* should have seen him during 1827-1835.

National Consciousness:

The question arises how the earlier *vāggēyakāras* of eminence happened to omit the patriotic element in their amaranthine songs of ever-green beauty and grandeur. Surely it was not the lack of national consciousness. Perhaps their deep commitment to spiritual endeavours left little occasion to resort to it. They hailed Goddess as Bharati and described gods and goddesses with various attributes taken from geographical and other features of the country. Dikṣitar does it in as in:-

Pasupatīśwaram [*Sivapantuvarāli*]: *'paschima kāṣmīri raja vinutam'*
Rāmachandram Bhāvayami [Vasanta] wherein he records habitation of Rama as Saketanagar [Ayodhya]
Gōkarnēśwara Pāhi [*Sourāṣtram*] and in many other compositions.

They named *rāgas* after the different parts of the country such as *Sourāṣhtram, Kēdāram, Kāmbhōjam* and *Kannadam,* trekked the vast land as they desired without any restriction, worshipped wherever they wished, made social contacts as they liked [and did everything short of what Bharati had done, viz., to hail the freedom of the country], establishing thereby that *Bhāratam paḷam peru nādu, nīr* [every citizen] *adan pudalvar* – Bharat is ancient and forget not that you are her son!

The torch of freedom had presumably to wait till 1857 to be lighted, to necessitate national songs in the manner it has been done by the twentieth century composers. Further the hindus were the main inhabitants of the land and religious unity *ipso facto* entailed national unity too. Sir Alfred C. Lyall clinches the issue remarkably well when he records

'The word "Hindu" is not exclusively a religious denomination; it denotes also a country and to a certain degree a race. When we speak of a Christian, Mohemedan or Buddhist, we mean a particular religious community, in the widest sense, without distinction of race or place. When we talk of a Russian or a Persian, we indicate country or parentage without distinction of creed. But when a man tells me that he is Hindu, I know that he means all three things together, viz.,

Religion,
Parentage and
Country

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

This triple meaning or connotation of the term Hindu shows the complexity of its origin, shows how Hinduism is twisted deep among the roots of Indian society, how it is a matter of birthright and inheritance; signifies that it means civil community, quite as much as a religious association – that man does not become a Hindu, but is born into Hinduism.'

This weighty observation formed part of a lecture at Cambridge in 1891 by Sir Lyall [1835-1911], a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service. The awareness of being a Hindu *ipso facto* meant by denotation and connotation that he is an Indian. Does not the concept of *gōtra* which renders a man in Kashmir and another in Kanyakumari a descendant of the same saint establish the unique truth of an integrated, socially, morally, racially and emotionally united well-knit **nation** and its off-springs enjoying a common citizenship?

It has also been an inherent and integral part of the belief that *bhakti* to God *ipso facto* meant *bhakti* to dear motherland [*Bhāratamāta*]. The need and nod to beat the drum had not arrived earlier than 1857 and it had to wait for a Bankim Chandra, a Tagore, a Bharati and a Mayuram Viswanatha Sastri! The pre-independence composers were as great and staunch nationalists and patriots as the latter tribes have been.

[**Note :** Parts Published in *Kalyāna Kalpataru* – February 2000.]

Bālagōpāla pāla (*Bhairavi*) : 'Thou art Sridhara and Damodara who wielded a flute and played the captivating role of cow-herd to display your *lilas*! What invincible deeds You have accomplished! How You had captivated the doting gopis of Gokulam! Balagopala, (the deity at Mannargudi) save me.

–Dikṣitar

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter III

The Dazzling Panorama of Chola Desa *Vāggēyakāras*

The fond father emerging from the tank after ablution stares at his beautiful child left by him on the steps with passionate anxiety. The fascinating child with bewitching looks smiles at its father with bewildered looks with innocent pranks betraying droplets of milk on its lips and cheeks. To the visibly upset and alarmed father's query on the source of milk on its face, the divine child raises its tender arms, which later on were to handle a pair of golden cymbals presented by God Himself, pointing in the direction of the temple adjacent to the tank and sings the highly popular extant song '*Tōḍudaiya Sevian*' in *Nāttupadai paṇ* [*rāga*] in its soft, mellifluous divine voice. How could a blessed posterity forget it? The song reverberates at temples and outside quite often to this day. The child grew up to be one of the greatest apostles of Lord Siva. [The life is fully detailed in *Yet Another Garland.*] The incident is celebrated annually as an enchanting festival appropriately called *Jñānapāl Utsav* [Festival of Milk of Wisdom]. When I witnessed it decades back, Tiruvidaimarudur Veeruswamy Pillai and his team were on nagaswara and there were *Vēda* and *Tēvāram* recitals, etc. presenting an atmosphere of absolute spiritual excellence. A child may perhaps sing but can it compose lyrics too, could confuse the mind of a rationalist. Even the loom in the house of poet Kambar would reel out poems, it is said. Tiger Varadachariar, an eminent musician, used to state figuratively that even pillars in his house would sing. It was a fact in regard to the members of his household though none had chosen to test it on pillars since they were all humble devotees like Pṛhlad which did not necessitate any experiment with pillars by a Nṛsimha! Spiritual legacy, divine outlook and, above all, the ever-green intellectually impregnated musical soil of Chola Desa could transform even a baby in womb into a *vāggēyakāra* of merit. The child, Tirujñanasambandar, with his senior enlightened, contemporary Saivite apostle Tirunavukkarasar, jointly holds the credit of being the earliest acknowledged poet-singers of Chola Desa and they belonged to the 6-7th century C.E. Their succulent songs are the most popular in tamil language shedding moral and spiritual wisdom and truth. There has been something passionately singular in the love of the Tanjorean for the river Cauvery, whether it be the eminent Tyagaraja or the rustic, unlettered man in the remotest corner of the belt. They worship River Cauvery as goddess, love it as mother and daughter and consider a spoonful of its water sufficient to enlighten and elevate them to absolute spiritual realization! How has it nurtured the most ancient civilization worthy of notice in the prime

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

epics of Bharat. The reverence and respect, the love and passion for the river were so intense and genuine that any intelligent person got the query till recent times whether he hailed from the Cauvery Delta.

Bharati sang *Ōrāyiram āṇḍu māṇḍu kiḍandapin vārādupōl vanda māmaṇiyai tōrpōmo?* Of course, he referred to political slavery for over a millenium the country had been subjected to and queried whether we could afford to lose the freedom we had secured – of course, freedom in his poetic fancy! In the field of art too, it is cyclic. Chola Desa, like most other parts of the South, either went to slumber for a pretty long period or what was created was mostly lost. Sixteenth century saw the finest of intuitive and inspired composer, Muthu Tandavar of Sirkali whose winsome masterpieces like *Teruvil Varāno* [*Khamas*] and *Ādikkondar* [*Māyāmālavagaula*] are luscious food of *bharata nātya* artistes for long. How often one hears at concerts and homes and in dance portrayals of such exquisite songs of enchanting grace and captivating fragrance as *Tāyē Yasōda* [*Tōdi*], *Pālvadiyum* [*Nātakurinji*], *Alai pāyudē* [*Atāna*] and *Ādādu Aśangādu* [*Madhyamāvati*]. Such sparkling songs were composed by the saintly, ascetic, Uthukadu Venkatasubba Ayyar [1700-1765] whose love of Lord Krisna was phenomenal. It is the alluvial soil rejuvenated by the holy river, Cauvery that brought forth successive waves of supreme, immortal composers. When I give expression to this widely accepted truth, I am not at the terminal of this short-listed endeavour in bringing to focus a few fragrant musical souls of destiny who enriched the cultural heritage of the land of their birth. *Nindhā stuti* [ostensibly deprecatory but laudatory in effect] has been the elegant tool of composers like Marimutha Pillai [1712-1787] and Papanasam Mudaliar who had presented exhilarating *padams* like *Ēdukkittanai mōdi* [*Surati*], *Kālai tūkki nindru* [*Yadukulakāmbhōji*]. *Ettanai Śonnalum* [*Sāveri*] and *Aduvum Śolluvāl* [*Sowrāṣtram*] which continue to bewitch and thrill millions during the last three centuries and have been the inexhaustible fountains and reservoirs of *bhāvas* [emotions] for portrayal by danseuces. Alluring felicity of lyric and captivating charm of the easy flowing tune practically compete not only with each other but with the delectable manifestation of *bhāvas* in countless poses in bharatanatya which is the monopoly of the country that is Bharat. Such flowers of diverse hues and fragrance, composers, musicians and dancers, bloomed luxuriously in the numerous gardens in the Cauvery Belt only. A visit to some of the temples like Chidambaram or Thanjavur would reveal how a galaxy of dancers had been presenting alluring *nātya* and *nṛtya* right from the dawn of civilization on this culture-soaked soil. *Tēvāram, Tiruppāvai, Śilappadikāram, Kallādam* and other works abound with copious details of music and dance of cultured elegance, cerebral maturity and lyrical majesty. Pandanallur, Vazhuvur, Swamimalai and many other places became bharatanatya cradles of lavish fame.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Operas?

It is intriguing to find that there had been an invisible force at work to present an *inter se* allocation among *vāggēyakāras,* each to present an opera in a different language. Thus if Narayana Tirtha [c.1580-1680] presented *Sri Kṛiṣṇa Līlā Taraṅgini* in sanskrit, Arunachala Kavirayar [1711-1778] took up *Rāma Nātakam* in tamil and Tygaraja [1767-1847] composed in telugu *Nowka Caritram* and *Pṛhlāda Caritram.* Eminent revolutionary composer Gopalakrsna Bharati [1811-1881] brought out the epoch-making tamil opera *Nandanār* which had a magnificent, record-breaking reception through dramas, *kalakṣēpas*, and films. In fact, it is the earliest spiritual opera with a message on social uplift of the downtrodden. Harijan uplift undertaken by Gandhiji in the twentieth century had its moorings in the opera, Nandanar of Bharati. Unfortunately none of these operas enjoying felicity of lyric and eloquence of music is enacted as **opera now** though many of the songs are in wide currency. In this respect, Margadarsi Tsoukam Virabhadrayya of Melattur Bhagavata-mela [18th century] scores over others as his operas are enacted even now at Melattur annually. Males enact the roles like kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh and these are *nṛtya nātakas* using *jatis, swarajatis, varnams, sabdams, rāgamālikas, etc.* These are enacted in front of the temple under improvised shed and stage.

Nāṭya is indeed a way of life, spontaneous to the Tanjorean and no occasion - *bhajan, kālakṣēpa*, drama, function or ritual -is missed to present dances in some form or other. Pandanallur, Vazhuvur, etc. have inscribed their names on the Dance Map of the country [nay, of the world] and have delineated their own *bānis.* The Tanjore Quartette raised the art to pristine heights of glory and codified the concert format besides composing *jāvalis*, etc. Vaideeswarankoil Subbaramayya, Melattur Venkatarama Sastri, Ghanam Krsna Ayyar, Patnam Subramania Ayyar and the Sirkali maestros had left conjuring *padams* of exquisite beauty and dance potential. The land produced such a rich crop of eminent composers, etc. and in such abundance that several songs are extant but their authors are unknown and *vice versa.* 'Give the topic, take a song' was easy to many in villages. The fertility of the soil and its rejuvenating waters cradled and nursed geniuses and maestros that they had their inspiring, artistic, affluent echo in the minds and hearts of composers and artistes. Unlettered rustics would not lag behind in enlarging artistic yarns. That was the measure of the Cauvery Belt. As were the people, so were the kings too.

Royalty, apart from sterling patronage, contributed much in the allied fields of music, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, etc. Many of them were authorities in the field. Their courts were beehives of artistic ebullience and creativity. Rajah Reghunatha Naik [1600-1630 or 1614-1640] composed *kāvyas, prabandhās* and *yakṣagānas* in sanskrit and telugu while Shahaji II [1684-1712] and others distinguished themselves equally. Shahaji

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

authored the *Pallaki Sēva Prabandha* in telugu, Tulajaji [1728-1736] authored *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛta* [1775] and Serfoji II [1798-1832] was multi-faceted. Chief Minister Govinda Diksitar [16/17th centuries] authored *Saṅgīta Sudhā* and *Sāhitya Sudhā* and his immortal son, Venkatamakhin devised the *Mēlakarta* Scheme in his *Caturdandi Prakāśika*. Akalanka Govindacharya was attached to the Thanjavur Court as astrologer and his work *Saṅgraha Cūdāmani* holds the field for raga classification from the days of Tyagaraja.

Devotionals :

Few pieces of literature or art exist in India that does not involve divinity, the eternal source of inspiration. Like Maharastra, the South excelled in devotional music and the Cauvery Belt proudly presented the galaxy including the *Panchamurtis, viz.,*

Sri Sadasiva Brhmendral	c.1560-1782
Swami Narayana Tirtha of Varahur-Tirupunturutti	c.1580-1680
Sri Bodhendra Swamigal	c.1610-1692
Sri Sridhara Venkatesa Arya of Tiruvisainallur	c.1630-1730
Sri Sadguru Swamigal of Marudhanallur	c.1777-1817

Apostles of Lord Siva and Viṣṇu and many others have made hefty, enduring contributions which are the proud legacy of the area and are sung with spiritual flavour and devotion. There were in fact scores of eminent *bhāgavatās* who composed and sang their gifted songs of sheer devotion in *bhajans* performed everywhere in scores till the middle of the twentieth century and danced to the delight and salvation of thousands of devotees. Such songs continue to have sway at concerts and the few *bhajans* that are performed still.

Patriotic songs :

Vedanayakam Pillai, Mayavaram Viswanatha Sastri, Namakkal Kavigñar and many others composed scintillating songs of patriotism to instill and spur to action dormant patriotism and national instinct. In fact, *Jayati Jayati Bhārata Mātā* of Sastri was considered along with *Vandē Mātaram* and *Jana Gana Mana* for selection as national song. Villages resounded with numerous songs spun out by local composers, dramatists and singers to whom composing luscious songs in lilting tunes was mere child play. Thousands of villages regularly staged dramas annually at the time of temple or harvest festivals and entire shows would reverberate with music, all native to the soil in conception, content and presentation. Thousands of felicitous songs in conjuring tunes, all produced by native musical souls, were in currency in the corners of the land to aid those engaged in trades and agriculture, and all enjoying anonymity of authors!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Trinity :

Hundreds had contributed phenomenally to the growth and sustenance of Classical Carnatic music. Quite a sizeable number of them hailed only from the Cauvery Belt which appropriated and monopolized a lion's share in every segment of art. They elevated the initiated and the lay, helping them to trek along the solemn, serene, spiritual and artistic *prakārās* [corridors] of the Temple of Music to the sanctum. The Classical Carnatic Trinity, besides stalwart *vāggēyakāras* like Patnam Subramania Ayyar and hundreds of others, provided stability and vitality to the Carnatic musical system in a measure that is *nonpareil* indeed. Where will this system be if the Trinity were not born and had not blest it with hundreds of juicy, soul-stirring, heart-warming songs conforming to *lakṣana* and *lakṣya* and pregnant with meaning and message providing structure, spirit, grace and appeal? They had placed the system on the *rāja mārga* of musical grandeur, which has insured the system for all times. Purandaradasa and Ramadasa were taken to the people of Tamil Nadu by Tyagaraja who paid homage to them and sang their songs. Tulajah, in his *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛta* quoted Purandaradasa as an authority and B.V.K. Sastry believes that this perpetuated the reputation of the Dasa. Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri had their ancestry in Andhra Pradesh. It was so with Narayana Tirtha and many others. But the **flowers bloomed only in the lily and lotus ponds in the Cauvery Basin** rich with musical pollens. Like a transplanted crop, the visitors to the Basin too imbibed the glory of the place and perhaps outshone the locals. In fact, the belief among artistes then was, 'Visit Thanjavur and graduate yourself'. So much so, there was a perpetual caravan of titans like Bobbili Kesaviah, Govinda Marar and Bidaram Krishnappa to test their musical pulse in the grand melodic clinics of Thanjavur Belt. They came as if to the jeweller and went back decorated with name and fame.

The stock of pollens has, it is true, dwindled in recent decades but not lost totally. Papanasam Sivan, Tanjore Sankara Ayyar and others have kept aloft the flag of prestige and image of Chola Desa. Its fertile soil and the rejuvenating waters of the Cauvery did whip up the inspiration of bards and there ensued a bumper harvest of songs, music, musical works. The glory goes to the land and its waters without doubt. Perhaps someone might look for a certificate to that effect. Here it is from the eminent violin colossus, Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore T. Chowdiah:

> 'Go to the Cauvery Belt. Every village has its own musician, *bhāgavata* or *vāggēyakāra* of eminence who does not know where the next meal would come from!'

That was absolutely true. It was a proven fact. It is at once a tribute to the affluence of art and the tragedy of the economics of surplus. One could say without

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

fear of demur that gracious Art took its birth and found its congenial home in Thanjavur belt. Will Chola Desa ever regain its ancient, effulgent glory!

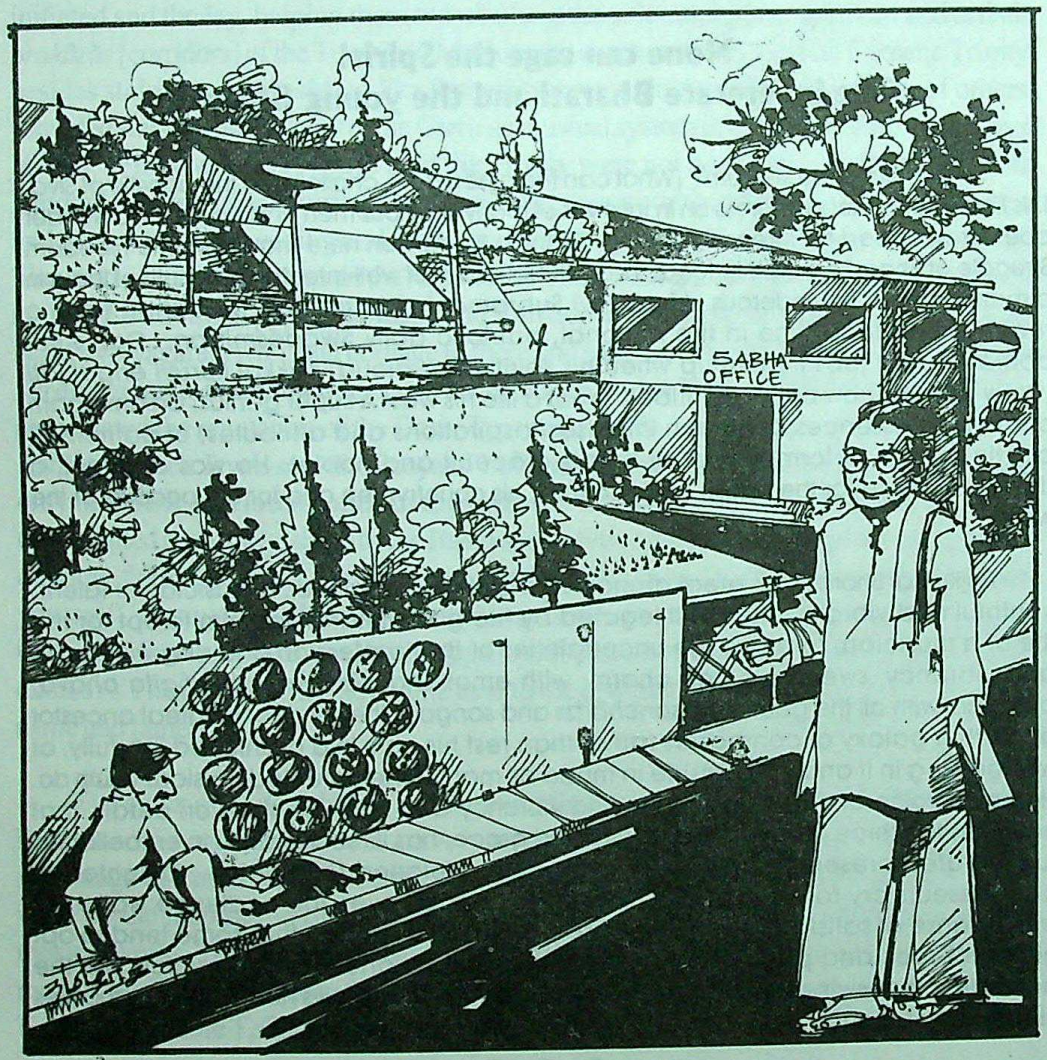
None can cage the Spirit!
The inveterate Bharati and the young Bharati

'*Śiraichāl̤ai enna śeyyum*?' [What can the prison do?], challenged the apostle of Siva. This finds pronounced expression in the lives of many illustrious men and women. No wonder poet Gray added his threnody stating, 'Many a Hampden here may rest'. The Freedom Struggle of Bharat brought to focus the invincible spirit of well-intentioned youth of India in a manner that is splenderous. Mahakavi Subramania Bharati was for a short while a teacher and for a time in the national, patriotic daily *Swadēśmitran.* Can such domesticated jobs tie him up when his spirit cried aloud, *Kākkai kuruvi eṅgal jāti* [Crow and sparrow are of our tribe]! What a life his was! A super genius, an amalgam of the best essences of human impulses, aspirations and attributes, of patriotism, poetic talents, reformer and all that is gráceful and noble! He was a fighter, a fighter all his life for the cause of his country, his countrymen and for the peoples of the world!

Rajkumar Bharati is his great grandson, a qualified engineer, a musician of talent, youthful and vibrant. The spirit legated by the great Bharati led him to opt for the life of a musician, to brave the uncertainties of that profession and sing with gusto and vibrancy, sweetness and charm, with emotional *sāhitya* and *saṅgita bhāva,* pregnant with all the *gamakas, sanchāras* and *saṅgatis,* the songs of his great ancestor and other galaxy of composers rather than rest his oars in a cushioned job fully, or with one leg in it and one outside in music as many other talented musical youth do. He has a voice of masculine vigour and vibrancy and feminine stress on detail, that traverses the three octaves with felicity and grace, has its sound base in embellished full-throated presentation, with no tinge of that feigned false voice. Enlightened connoisseurs cry for such presentation. The concert over, the audience walks out with a sense of satisfaction and enthused spirits. [It is strange that some tend to opt either for rock and pop or for the absolutely soft, feigned, muffled voice like the pendulum that swings from one extreme to the other and knows not the beauty that lies hidden in between!)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri



CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter IV

Lingering Appeal of Music

Travails of a *Rasika* [A Farce]

[Note : The farce 'Travails and Tribulations of a Musician' finds place in the *Fragrant Garland* -Volume IV]

'Dad, no concert today, please! Festival is over, you know...'

[Father turns back from the exit door, smiles mysteriously and walks out on his intended mission with determined pace, conforming to *tala suddham*.]

'Murli, what does that smile of dad signify?'

'Why, do I not know him, Pushpa! It simply indicates that I am a mere fool!'

[Both laugh affably.]

The aged gentleman, half bald like St. Thomas Mount, with shrubby left-overs in patches precariously but stubbornly perching on like abandoned Pakistani intruders' camps in Kargil Ranges in Kashmir, enjoying an imposing stature and deportment, peeps beyond the locked gates, inside which just the previous eve a bustling gathering of musical enthusiasts was alert and active. All is now dark save the lone languishing tube light callously left by an insensible crowd to waste its effulgence on an empty lawn. All the air a solemn stillness holds save sporadic sounds of girlish pranks emanating from the sparsely-lighted adjacent bungalow. Nothing else is heard or seen.

Our gentleman paces assiduously, sometimes in jerky *durita kāla*, often in popular *madhyama kāla* and sparingly in ponderous *couka kāla*, of course, pickled now and then with unheard murmurs of muffled soliloquy. More often his wisdom-soaked countenance changes and his eyes peer through the painted gates and live fences seeking despondently for something that is not there – quite like the old fisherman in the ballad waiting on the sea-shore in the fond hope of his lost and never-to-return son being sighted on any of the numerous boats and *catamarans* returning to the shore after night-long

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

ventures. The gentleman finds it difficult to comprehend in his profound passion for the fine art how a musical festival could end and why. Passion for music relegates reason to the background or does it negate? True to the advice of Sri Tyagaraja, his mind stands integrated with melody – *nāda tanum aniśam* [*Chittaranjani*].

[Now a climb down from the ethereal to the eartheal - sorry, I should have said terrestrial or earthy. After all, we, mortals, have necessarily to touch the earth as we are neither celestials nor ghosts. Surely none would wish, or be happy, to be a ghost. The only alternative left is to be a celestial. But this entails obtaining a nativity certificate in our own dear native land, a caste certificate in a casteless, secular society, attending entrance examinations, interviews, etc – all endless, irksome, uncertain harassment, if not unimaginably vexatious ordeals. Better to be earthy since a bird in hand is worth two in the bush!]

Stands there a little away an old vendor of cow-dung cakes [*viratti*] with a sizeable accumulation, owing to a recessive market, of unsold cakes. It may not fail to remind *samskāra*-oriented passers-by of *Vēdic* rituals and the indispensability of this ancient *swadeśi* product for their edification. How in this crowded city, the vendor manages to secure the fast perishable raw material is a perplexing mystery. And indeed, what a wonderful product is it helping and playing a key-role in sustaining *sanātana dharmic* fires on *śrāddha* days in millions of homes from the days of the *Vēdas*! The eagle-eyed vendor, sighting our gentleman pacing intensely nearby, scratching his head, solicitously offers in a tone that is at once persuasive and affable:

> 'Sir, the cakes are well dried. Need not worry about carrying them home.
> There's a boy to help.'

The gentleman chuckles to himself recollecting that the time and need for the cakes [for his funeral] has not come yet and even if that distant event were to come gate-crashing in suddenly, it is for good chap Murli to bother about! He dispenses with the vendor's plea with a condescending smile and resumes pacing between the gate and the cake centre like the spindle in a loom involuntarily. One could not fail to notice fragrant elements and features of a good concert in his action like the free-play of *saṅgatis, kālapramāna, aṅga sēṣṭais* [facial changes, etc.] as well as tempo [*laya*], style [*bāni*]. As he paces, one could see his intense mental tension, now, a query in *Nāttaikurinji*, then despondency [*Huseni*], followed by a challenging countenance [*Atāna*] and so on.

❀❀❀❀

'So, there is no concert today!', a harrowing *jaru* type of anguish and realization in apparent self-pity in *Mukhāri* or *Sahāna* dawns and escapes his tight-lipped Roman mouth.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

But his heart vetoes what his mind truthfully seeks to accept and assimilate. Neither he has the heart to walk back home nor would the fairly long weary legs gather the requisite momentum to trek back in the absence of a strong command from cerebral centre. He is restless, frets and fumes and lingers on near the gates for brief moments – perhaps hoping to create a *trisanku* type of a musical concert without the *yōgic* vantage the ancient mighty royal saint enjoyed. Lost in the tropical jungle of uncertainty and confusion, he is not aware of creeping darkness enveloping around him with assured certainty, [being the lonely occurrence in this century that maintains punctuality still in this sacred land of a hundred thousand millions!] A few paces towards home, but he applies the brake and lingers on again like the anguished mother waiting at the threshold of her house with swelling tears for her darling son who had just that morn left her miserably alone on his premature but ordained last journey. Sombre silence keeps company and darkness screens her abject misery. And finally the forlorn lady withdraws inside the house, a body without soul, with none but abject wretchedness to console! Even so, our gentleman should have left. He is not seen there now.

'Murli, dad comes back. Keep your mouth shut.'

'Pushpa, do I not realize his distress and discomfiture! Sorry for good old dad. He is too passionately mad after music! How are we help?'

[Dad enters immersed in thoughts.]

Pushpa pretends not to notice him and muses in her soothingly mellifluous voice '*Sāntamu lēkha, sowkhyamu lēdu*', even as dad dumps himself on his old favourite cane chair that has kept him faithful company for decades.

Sri Rajagopala (*Savēri*) : 'Oh, Rajagopala, Doer of Sringara leelas, saviour of bhaktas, You reside in Champakaranya, also called Dakshina Dwarakapuri. Your smiling countenance denotes you are ever-joyous. Brahma, Narada and others chant your Taraka Nama. Your left side in in woman garb. Murari, you are Embracing Rukmini and Satyabhama.

–Dikṣitar

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter V

Drama & Music

The Scenario in Karnataka

General Introduction :

Music, dance and drama are the triple allied fields of art that bind Man with fellow beings as well as God and Nature in a measure few others do. The development of one influences and helps in the progress of the others. Each is dependent in some way or other on the other to bring to full blossom and to highlight its fragrance and excellence, while it is a basic fact that music enjoys an independent identity and role of its own. The other two attain their peak of performance only when aided by music. Thus it could be said that music enjoys the status of *primus inter pares*!

'*Rig Vēda* in the tenth *mandala* alludes to the thickening cloud of dust that is whipped up by the dancer's feet. *Atharva Vēda* in the *Pṛitvi Sūkta* refers to open air dances. The hymn says, "This is the earth, on which with clamour loud, men that are mortal sing and dance." *Jātaka* tales [c.600 B.C.E.] refer to *samajja* or *samaja* festivities full of dance, music and drama held in the Ranga, theatre. *Ayoghar Jataka* significantly states, "In the theatre, a juggler can deceive the people's sight but his quick tricks would not prevail against Death". 'It is quite clear that drama along with music and dance was widely practised as an art and enacted on bare earth in open air, with the spectators sitting around. 'In many *Jātaka* tales including *Vidurapandita Jataka* and *Guttil Jataka*, we come across the expression *Chakkatichakke manchatimanche bhandimsu*', says M.L. Varadpande, 'meaning erecting seats in circle upon circle, tier upon tier, around the performing arena called *samājja mandal*, which is described by Bharata as *Sopana krti pithakam*.' This is apt to remind one of Greek theatres.

Varadpande also refers to *Buddhist Vinaya* mentioning a sort of ***Sātviga satyāgraha*** **[non violent protest] objecting to enactment of some dramas!** Resident monks of Kita Hill called Assagi and Punabassu spread their robes in the theatre telling the dancers to dance over them if they wanted :

Rangamajzhe pi sanghatim pattharitva
Nacchakim even vadanti
"Igha bhagini nacchassu." – *Chullavaggo*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bhasa mentions *ranga nepatya*, which should be a retiring room or green room. Thus progress has been consistently seen in enacting dramas in Bharat. The venerable dramaturgist and author of *Nātya Sāstra* [200 B.C.E. –200 C.E.], Bharata has left enough written evidence attesting to the highly advanced state of art even in those distant times when much of the world outside was dark. About 1684 *slokas* deal with music, *tāla*, etc., as applied to drama. Scholars view that Bharata had taken plots from *Rig Vēda*, music from *Sāma Vēda,* acting from *Yajur Vēda* and aesthetics from *Atharva Vēda*. Ancient tamils classified works under three heads, *Eyal, Iśai* and *Nātakam* [prose, music which includes poetry and drama] indicating that the art of drama had already reached the pinnacle of sophistication from the point of pure art to qualify and figure in a specific primary classification.

It is true however that centuries had to pass by for stage equipment, decoration, scenes, make-up, costumes, lighting, auxiliaries and incidentals to reach the level of finesse and perfection. After all, is there any end to perfection? A proverb beautifully asserts, 'Who can beautify Beauty?' From modern conception of drama, one is apt to take the highbrow view that dramas of old were archaic and rudimentary. While this hind view could be partially true in respect of incidental aspects, certainly it was not so with regard to plots, dialogues, acting and music which constitute the soul and substance of a drama.

In India, the *Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, purāṇas* and ancient lore as well as the works of the celestial poets like Kalidasa, Bhasa and Harsa have provided perennial themes and plots which have stood the test of millennia not only in Bharat but elsewhere in Asia and are well worth, and should have found, an honoured and special entry in letters of gold in the *Guinness Book of Records*. Professional dramatists, drama troupes and amateurs staged dramas on festive occasions taking individual phases from them for a day or in serials spread over two or three days. Normally the venue chosen was adjacent to a temple, community open ground or even river-beds. The stage was a make-shift dais sufficiently wide and deep for free movement of actors and strong enough to stand the impact of the ferocity and stampede of tyrants like Hiranya and Ravana under a shamiana or thatches cover. A scene was permanently fixed as a backdrop which may or may not have relevance to the topic of the drama. It was actually ignored by spectators. The relevance of scenes did not attract attention for long. The spacious open ground in front was not only elastic to accommodate hundreds or even thousands but was free from pollution, the curse of modern days. Normally a backstage singer well versed in music and enjoying a high pitch voice was there to provide musical inputs as and when necessary. Orchestra as such was unknown but the nucleus was there in the shape of an instrumentalist [harmonist in the last one or two centuries] and a percussionist. A few [gas] lights near the stage was enough to complete the arrangements.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The staging of dramas was announced by beat of drums and in later days by cart-borne drummers and wall posters. Audience came from far and wide to avail of the entertainment, to derive spiritual benefit or out of curiosity. They occupied the ground carving out adequate space to squat, relax, converse and sometimes muse the tunes. Normally people came with family and friends. Furniture was rarely seen except a few brought by socially well-to-do people for themselves. Mother earth cradled the vast audience and none was averse to enjoy the lap of it, nay they felt perfectly at ease. The audience felt perfectly at home on the ground [mother earth] and false prestige hindered them not in sharing their innocent joy. A few brought one or two thatches or old mats to spread and lie down thereon. It was not uncommon for some to sleep; and snoring was not a hindrance as it was in the open. Next morn the few equipment brought in would be taken off leaving nothing save remnants of innocent eatables, groundnut shells and a few pieces of waste materials. If arrangements needed about an hour or two, dismantling took just a few minutes. Dramas were enacted for laudable, noble causes like propitiating gods, beginning of agricultural season or harvests, etc. Rarely it was commercial and the artistes got just a small pittance to meet essential expenses. While pilgrim centres and bigger places witnessed comparatively more than one drama in a year, it was like old time cricket test matches in other places coming on once in three or four years. The expense was met out of village common funds or from rentals from fishery in local tanks or by leasing out community trees. Dramas were arranged by village panchayats [figuratively called by Gandhiji as village republics] or leaders called *nāttānmaigārs*. Such was the general practice in this great land of Bharat which has always encouraged art and music passionately in a measure not seen anywhere in the world.

Costumes were there but not of the lavish type as of now. Make-up was deep, shiny and prominent to be visible to the last row of the audience and it was vital as lighting was minimal.

Music was *sine quo non* in a drama, nay it was, until recently, the soul and substance of it. A few minutes of dialogue would lead to a song and the more numerous the songs sung, the greater was the popularity of the troupe. Whether the version that paleolithic men spoke through symbols was true or not, it is a fact that in dramas decades back, songs couched in classical *rāgas* were the main stay indicating that music was not only *sine quo non* but that the people longed for it. *Sans* mike, the music had to be heard in the open air ground [could it be called a theatre?] by the spread-out audience, sitting, standing, lying down, etc. So the timbre of the voice was fundamental and *tara sthāyi* commanded special respect and keen attention. Generally, the actor while singing stationed himself near the harmonist or other instrumentalist to ensure harmony and musical effect in the open-air theatre. Songs like *Kōdaiyilē iḷaippātrikkoḷḷum* [sung by S.G. Kittappa] and *Jagadōdhārana* [sung by B.S. Raja Iyengar] thrilled the music crazy audience and endeared

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the actor. Songs in *tara sthāyi* carried the spectators with the actors. Such actors became household names even in remote villages and people were not averse to trek miles to hear their voice and rendition just once more. A few popular songs unconnected with the theme of the drama would also be sung. Play-back music was not in vogue but the harmonist or someone else lent voice support and engaged the audience during scene changes and intervals. [Harmonist for dramas enjoyed a delectable style of presentation that was at once conjuring, lilting and alluring. We had many such as S.G. Kasi Ayyar, Khader Batcha and H.K. Seshagiri Rao.] Calls for encore were not infrequent and compliance added to the participatory popularity of the actor. In this context, only musicians and songsters with a rich voice had to take on lead roles and enrich the shows. Some *ālāpana* and a little *swara* rendition were indulged in quite occasionally. Songs were in popular tunes, simple, catchy, easy to carry home by the musically inclined audience to relive the experience and enjoy. "How excellently he sang", "It was the finest song, I have heard in my life", "None could sing like him/or her", "I was not able to contain tears" and "What a divine voice he has" were comments that arose from the bottom of their hearts and genuinely aired in appreciation by audience trekking back home in the cool, calm, pre dawn hours. Yes, dramas mostly commenced after 9 p.m. and ended at about 4 a.m. Not that actors were incapable of continuing but physical needs of the audience too needed a finale! The actors had the stamina, spirit of endurance, dedication, commitment, etc. and the audience too the patience, passion and gluttonous appetite. The enactment would be the talk of the area for days together. There used to be an upsurge of emotions attendant on it in old days. Children re-enacted, women rehearsed the songs at the river, tank or the well. Men quarreled on their individual choices of the best act, actor, song or *bhāva-rasa* soaked piece. One could see the simple uninhibited joy [and destiny obscure!] on their innocent faces. Dialogues often took to music and free *manōdharmic* asset enabled them to converse in music!

An unsung but refined rapport did exist then between actors and audience. Viewers were not inclined to pick up holes but were indulgent enough to fill in gaps, ignore blemishes and supply imaginatively what a drama could not present on the stage like armies at the Battle of Kurukṣētra. Even rustics quite uninitiated in the arts of music, drama and ancient lore were capable of robust appreciation and mentally were in tune with the roles played; They mused, laughed, wept and got angry with, as each situation demanded, with the actors. [Why the eminent C.R. Das could not stomach the brutality of the foreign constable, enacted only by an Indian in a drama and unable to contain his rage, he flared up and sent his chappal flying to hit the actor on the stage!] Senior musicians in their passion for absolute melody were not averse to attend dramas and enjoy.

Cinema came. Television followed to sound the death knell to this fragrant art as they provided facilities at home or a near-by theatre with inputs that are out of reach in a drama.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Not only the number of dramas staged has radically declined; but the number of stalwart actors too is in *avarōhana.* Just as the circus died earlier, listless dramas tend to follow though the art still lingers on fighting for bare survival. It is unfortunate as village dramas sustained hundreds of musicians, actors, accompanists and side-men in their native homes. Souls which were mouth-pieces of emotions once have to turn to routine mundane work for bare existence!

The Scenario in Karnataka

The above general account applied to dramas in different States *mutatis mutandis,* of course, with local variations and emphasis. Karnataka was no exception and it has had a brilliant history of dramas to be proud of. The original scripts were naturally in the mother of languages, sanskrit as it could only be. Later Narayanappa of Gadag and Lakshmisa of Devanuru presented scripts in poetry with metre and rhythm. In urban areas, singers called gamakis sang the verses in appropriate *rāgas.* In rural areas, a *bhāgavata* used to sing followed by others, each representing a particular character singing and elaborating for the benefit of the audience around him. This should have been the primitive stage of dramas and was called **tāla maddule**. The **bayalata** [said to be called so as dramas **were** presented in the open] mode was an improvement with a stage in the middle of a street enacting episodes with costumes and make-up. Each character recited the verse first with dance and followed it up with extempore dialogues. **Yakṣagana** was a more advanced version with classical music and dance staged in urban theatres. These were similar to the Melattur Bhagavata Melas.

Kannamayya or Kannamarya is credited with the earliest translation of the sanskrit drama *Mālati Mādhavam* into kannada as seen from Poet Durgasimha's *Panchatantra* and Jayakirti's *Chandonusasana.* There is also reason to believe that dramas in kannada were being staged prior to the 12th century C.E. as evidenced by Nagavarma's *Karnātak Kāvyalōcana* [c.1150 C.E.] carrying kannada translations of Harṣavardana's *Nāgānanda* and Kalidasa's *Vikramōrvaśiya* and C.E. Kesiraja, author of *Sabda Manidarpana* [1260 C.E.], is being credited with writing kannada versions or translation of sanskrit dramas. But the earliest kannada drama available still in full book form is *Mitra Gōvinda* of Singanarya of the reign of Chikkadevaraja of Mysore [1680]. Partisubba [18-19th centuries] and Nanjunda Bhagavata, both hailing from Mangalore region, had presented many *yakṣagānas*. Lingaraja Urs [c.1850 C.E.], hailed as Ubhayakavi, Abhinava Bhoja and Aliyadevaru, not only promoted drama writers but was himself a dramatist of stature and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

had written about sixty *yakṣagānas*. Enactment of dramas was fully inspired by sanskrit dramas like *Abhijñāna Śākuntala, Vikramorvaśiya* and *Mālavikāgnimitra*, all of the greatest of immortal Indian poets, Kalidasa. The scripts blended with music elegantly as if they were born twins or like the concept of *Arthanāriswara*, were one composite whole!

Vainika Vidwan and dramatist, C.K. Shankaranarayana Rao remarks that in the development of the modern stage, Parsis had played a distinguished part as they spent lavishly on every aspect of stage and dramaturgy. In 1843 Vishnudas Bhave wrote *Rāja Gōpichand* in gujarati, marathi and hindi to enable the widest use of the script. The hindi dramatist of the later half of the 19th century, Bharatendu Harischandra invested the stage with a mission. As Karnataka was still wedded to *bayalatas* and *yakṣagānas*, Marathi dramas invaded its stages with such domineering vigour that they became the rage of the day. This naturally induced some eminent men to bring out dramas in kannada. Santakavi Sakkare Balacharya started the Karnataka Nataka Company in 1884 C.E. at Gadag and put on stage kannada versions of *Usha Harana, Keechaka Vadha, Bānāsura* and many others. Music continued to dominate the dramas naturally and men donned female roles still. Santakavi's was too mighty an effort of an individual to last beyond a decade and a half since with the demise of star performers like Konnur Jivu Balappa and Dambala Hucchancharya, the company had to pull down shutters. Actors were mostly scholars and Venkanamacharya had presented the actors with many scripts to enact. Santakavi's advent inspired the growth of many mandalis but many ceased to function and died young except Bharata Kalothejaka Sangita Samaja which continued to do well. As twentieth century neared, a spurt in dramatic activities in Karnataka was witnessed as elsewhere.

Two particular gentlemen gave a flying start to the art. Sirhat Venkoba Rao and Kalburgi Matha Sivamurtiswamy started Sri Lakshmi Prasad Natak Mndali [1903] and Konnurkar Kadasiddheswara Sangita Natak Mndali [1907] and presented popular kannada dramas like *Sākuntala, Pṛhlāda, Krishṇa Leela* and *Rāmāyaṇa* besides social hits like *Kālidāsa Kalpita.* Sivamurtiswami introduced female actors. Garud Sadasiva Rao, an eminent actor of the Sirhatt company started his own which presented good shows for about two decades. Electric lights came to be slowly introduced with like improvement in other spheres. Marathi and Parsi companies commanded respect in Mysore Belt too. Maharaja Chamaraja Wodeyar Palace Company started enacting in 1881 famous scripts in kannada well translated from sanskrit by Basavappa Sastry, hailed as Abhinava Kalidasa. In this environment, Mandyam Rangachar started his Rajadhani Karnataka Mandali which competed with the Palace Company presenting top actors. The ruler took personal interest in the promotion of the art by sending top artistes to Mumbai to study stagecraft *in extenso* to enrich the kannada stage. Eminent composers like Sosale Garalapuri Sastri, Pandit Basappa Sastri, etc. were entrusted with writing fresh drama scripts. There was all

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

round improvement and many sabhas came on the scene inspired by the success of the above. [Yesterday's jockey or player is today's trainer or coach and yesterday's helper is today's actor or conductor.] Senior actors naturally started their own troupes.

A.V.Varadachar was a memorable star on the Karnataka horizon. His Ratnavali troupe was a rage, a musical extravaganza and musicians loved to attend and enrich their own styles. It presented classical dramas like *Sākuntala, Ratnāvali, Manmata Vijaya, Līlāvati* and *Pṛhlāda.* Varadachar introduced novel styles and methods in dialogues and music. And the glamour and lure were such, that eminent musicians stood to gain by attending his dramas. He brought forth, like S.G. Kittappa, a revolution in stage music and no wonder B.S. Raja Iyengar, R. Nagendra Rao, S. Nagesha Rao, M.G. Mari Rao and many others, all associated with this company, were idols of music-crazy populace of Karnataka. H.K.Seshagiri Rao whom he discovered as a child with a promise and promoted him soon became a star harmonist. The company was, as it were, a breeding ground for a galaxy of stalwart singers. Bodha Rao was also in that troupe and like K.S. Anantanarayana Ayyar, Sthanam Narasimha Rao and Balagandharva, he was a star performer in female roles. [Hope I could mention that I had played the role of heroine, Sarasa in *Samsāra Bandham,* the tamil version of *Samsāra Nauka,* on October 8, 1944 at the Museum Theatre, Madras and it was acclaimed as, honestly I state, superb.]. Bodha Rao was a trail-blazer in introducing Classical Carnatic music, in lieu of marathi tunes, providing orchestral pit in front of the stage and constructing a fully equipped modern theatre. There were other troupes such as Chamundeswari Company, S.S.Nataka Mandali, Kalamandali of *Samsāra Nouka* fame staged daily for months at Tulasitota Theatre. C.B. Mallappa presented memorable dramas on devotional themes like Tukaram, Tulasidas and Kabirdas through his Sri Chandra Mouliswara Nataka Sangha. There were thus many troupes and the public gave tremendous enthusiastic support. Music, as usual, dominated.

The above were all professional troupes. The Amateur Dramatic Association was started in 1909 purely as service to art and veteran actors like B.S. Iyengar and his sons, S.K. Iyengar and his son and daughters, C.K. Nagaraja Rao, and later, his brother Vainika-Actor C.K.Shankara Narayana Rao took prominent roles and promoted the art in a great way. The Association did not rest content with kannada dramas but staged telugu and hindi dramas too. Bellary Raghavachar lent prominent succour by taking lead roles himself. The Association availed of the services of eminent writers like C.K. Venkataramiah and Devadu Narasimha Sastry to present fresh episodes including contemporary subjects of interest. In presenting social dramas, T.P. Kailasam was most prominent and he sponsored the dramas through dramatic wings of schools, etc. and came to be hailed as Kannadak Kobbane Kailasam in token of the high popularity of his dramas. In 1952, his 'Home

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Rule' drama was put on board. The United Artists, Bangalore brought out many new productions. This marks a phase, a stage in Kannada Drama.

Now the scene has to shift to distant **Gubbi,** which was revolutionizing stage, troupe, theme and presentation. It was, as it were, a New Era had commenced in kannada theatre. Gubbi is for renaissance in kannada drama what Tiruvaiyaru is for classical Carnatic music and Benares is for hinduism. Quite by an act of Providence, a hindu, a jain and a muslim – Nilakantappa, Chandanna and Aziz Seth woke up with their dream plan on the auspicious day of November 28, 1884, collected small amounts from the ordinary people of the town and started Gubbi Sri Channabasaveswara Krpaposhita Nataka Sangha which announced a fresh daring epoch in the history of drama in Karnataka and installed the petty town on the map of histrionic talents and achievements of Bharat. It was a small step they took at first but a magnificent grand era it was that ensued.

Gubbi Veeranna [January 24,1891– October 18, 1972] entered the company in his sixth year initially to take on small child roles. An alert mind assimilated adequate literacy and expertise to play violin, harmonium and tabla. The actor who took on roles like thief was absent once and Veeranna taking up that role excelled. That was the beginning and there was no foreseeable limit to his talents and he took on different roles. His star shone effulgently to the end and penumbra was totally absent. In 1917 he took over the company and worked remarkable wonders with its management. There was good pay for actors, beds to rest, good food to take and everything to make the artiste to dream of art alone and to regret that there was nothing to complain about. And it yielded immediate dividends. It was a happy troupe of dedicated, talented actors who delighted the public with the cream of histrionics. Elite actors rushed to join it including S.Nagesh Rao, M.N. Gangadara Rao, M. V. Subbiah Naidu, G.V. Iyer, Muthanna [later the top film star, Rajkumar], Sundaramma, Aswathamma, Jayamma and a long list of stalwarts. Veeranna presented ever fresh dramas, many of them written for and got specially by him. Bellave Narahari Sastri was among the writers to help in imparting training to actors. Karur Krishna Rao was in charge of music. Some of the prominent landmarks in the bright career of this company, which saw golden and diamond jubilees with remarkable achievements under its stalwart dynamic master, Veeranna were :

Staging of Prabhāmani Vijaya, Sūra Mahima, Akkammādevi, Buddha Dasāvatara, etc. all new dramas, besides Gulēbakāvali, Subhadrā Parinayam, Krishna Līla, Kamsa Vadha, Yamagarva Bhanga, Kabirdas, Rukmini Swayamvara, Siva Jalandara Yuddha, Ratnāvali, etc.

Staging of dramas at his own newly built Sri Channabasaveswara Nātaka Shāla at Bangalore from November 14,1924;

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Starting of the teen-agers Gubbi Sri Bala Kala Vivardani Nataka Sangh presenting special plays after giving full training;

Construction of Sivananda Theatre and opening it on April 31, 1930 and

Presenting chariots, elephants, deer, majestic battle arena, etc on the stage.

Veeranna did not fail to produce films and after his demise, his sons continued the company. It will thus be seen that the Gubbi company is perhaps the oldest, living dramatic company in India enjoying vast professional prowess, fame, attainments and glory and Gubbi Veeranna, who had been lavishly honoured during his lifetime, is among the Stage Immortals of the world. His effulgent life is specially noticed further in Part II.

Mention may be made of the doyen of dramas. M.V. Subbayya Naidu, whose entry into the Gubbi company was a personal watershed in his career. Later he founded his own Sri Sahitya Samrajya Nataka Mandali along with B. Nagendra Rao. He was the first to introduce playback music engaging Periyanayaki and Janaki for the drama *Vasantasēna* in kannada. He was taking up *Bhookailās* in telugu but linguistic fanaticism raised cyclonic protest against his entering 'the telugu art for telugus alone'. The first day, pandemonium broke out but the beauty of the presentation won over all subsequently and the drama ran for six months! He was brilliant on the stage indeed.

[I am indebted to **Vainika Vidwan C.K. Shankaranarayana Rao** for sparing his valuable time to enlighten me on the Karnataka scenario, which I had been pursuing to secure for long. Brother of C.K. Nagaraja Rao, dramatist and writer, Shankaranarayana Rao too was a prominent actor who later on chose to concentrate on veena and teaching. Part II carries an account of his eventful life.]

Br̥haspatē (*Atāna*) : Unable to bear the sight of his disciple, Thambiappa suffering from stomachpain, Dikṣita composes a song taken from mantras to be sung on brahaspati. Thambiappan is cured! This leads to his composing songs on the other Grahās too.

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter VI

Music and Dance v. Religion and Other Arts

A Research – oriented *Mahayajña*!

Music is universally acclaimed as the finest of gracious arts with ancient orientation, unlimited appeal, massive popularity and pristine image. The genius of the Indian brought dance [*nātya*] within the definition of *saṅgitam.* This universal phenomenon has received accentuated emphasis, lavish application and adoption in India from time immemorial as both had come to be treated as principal handmaids of religion and spiritual endeavours. In the East, the ruddy edge of the morning sun swiftly leaps on the horizon with little or no twilight. It has been so with the dawn of civilization too in India. The earliest glimpse of a solid and sound cultural efflorescence is provided by the *Vēdas,* ancient Tamil literature and excavations by the Archeological Department. The pictures presented by these clearly point to effulgent, highly developed skills, mature cultured living, and amazingly high standard of virtuous fine arts. Authorities trace music to *Sāma Vēda,* which is musically rendered with five or more notes both ascending [*ārōhana*] and descending [*avarōhana*]. Chanting of *Sāma Vēda* by two or more persons melodically with *sruti suddham* is thrilling and soul-stirring, And music has, with visionary wisdom, been elevated in India to the grade and status of the fifth *Vēda,* to indicate its vital relevance to life and the cultural milieu of India.

> *'Jagrāh paddyam rigvēdat Sāmābhyo gītamēvaca*
> *Yajurvēdadabhinayan rasānadārvanadapi'* I
> [Knowledge of the world from *Rig Vēda,* music from *Sāma Vēda,*
> the art of expression [dance] from *Yajur Vēda* and the theory
> of *rasa* from the *Atharvana Vēda* are taken.] – *Nātya Śāstra*

The only other faculty that has been conferred with such a high status is *Ayurveda,* the science of medicine. And quite intellectually and with profound wisdom and foresight, *saṅgitam* [music] itself had been defined as comprising *gītam* [lyric and vocal music], *vādyam* [instrumental music and percussion] and *nṛtyam* [dance and drama]. Nothing could be more accurate and brilliant than this.

The Everestian status accorded to music and dance has further been substantially fortified giving it a spiritual, divine base, flavour and relevance by the assertion that the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

seven notes of music, viz. *Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha* and *Ni* emanated from the faces of Lord Parameswara. Equally dance (*bharata nātya*) has been assigned a privileged status by tracing its origin to the Cosmic Dancer, Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram who has been crowned by the devout as the King of Dance! No wonder that the icon of Sri Nataraja is coveted all over the world as a priceless possession.

Music and dance, thus installed on the highest pedestal and hailed as the foremost fragrant of divine arts, are presented with prayer, devotion and dedication to Gods by the Indian at home, in the temple or elsewhere. This ancient cerebral act born of eloquent vision has been acknowledged, followed and strengthened by successive waves of eminent musicologists like Bharata, Dattila, Narada, Matanga, Sarngadeva, Kalladar, Ilango and Venkatamakhin and immortal, all-time great composers like Jayadeva, Uthukadu Venkatasubbier, Sirkali Tamil Trinity, Classical Carnatic Trinity, other saints and sages. No other nation except India has ennobled and exalted music and dance to such resplendent divine heights not merely in word but in deed by enlarging the scope, content and application of these allied arts to influence, inspire, promote and sustain other fields of vital stake to society and nation.

Religious, spiritual and philosophical pursuits constitute the very essence of life in India, which had at no time a regimented religion-oriented society. The fundamental fact remains that perhaps in India alone, in spite of its magnificent past and its massive philosophical and spiritual wealth, religion presents varied faces, mind-boggling aspects, baffling connotation, multitudes of observances and practices ever free for all to mend, amend, ignore or end. The nation has allowed each community, family, nay every individual within a family, to invoke and install a god of its/his choice or totally negate the existence of any! The panorama of gods and goddesses in India is perplexing, baffling and immeasurable. Communities and families continue to invest gods and goddesses with such image, characteristics and capabilities in conformity with their own selective individual tastes and wishes, genius and aspiration, culture and societal background, enlightenment, inclinations and other factors, apparent, hidden and elusive. They take delight in investing their selected God with such attributes to be a model to suit their individual genius. The democratic spirit, if it has any meaning, can be seen on the fullest focus in the ancient but living Indian religious and spiritual canvas.

The unequivocal fact remains that music and dance copiously borrowed from religion; and they, in turn, became prime handmaids of religion as the most efficacious instruments to promote and propagate spiritual and philosophical messages, theories, ideas and thoughts. The same holds true of other arts like architecture, sculpture and painting being substantially inspired, influenced and developed by religion and philosophy. Occupational trades and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

practices like agriculture, cattle-rearing, etc have also drawn succour and strength from music and dance enormously. The *inter se* phase of these is as old as Indian civilization and has a long, luminous, continuous and glorious continuity with a radiant past and effulgent present. There has never been a lull or pause in the inter-action among these and it has all along been a bright, noble, dynamic and romantic partnership where each lived, thrived and promoted the other and all lived for each! The matchless Indian prayer *sarvē janā sukhinō bhavantu* equally applies to all religions and spiritual pursuits and all arts too! Indian has never been averse to accept, assimilate and incorporate what is good in others. That has been the basic Hindu spirit evolved by the greatest of saints and sages. It is so in Indian music and dance.

Temples, *mandaps* and caves present an amazing plethora of music and dance panels in various forms, styles, contexts and appeal. Group singing as accompaniment to dance, orchestral presence, dances in myriad styles, symbolic hand and facial gestures [*karaṇas* and *adavus*] are all found in hundreds of temple sculptures. Musical instruments are galore; and dance postures hold eternal open-air classes conveying inspiration and lessons to the delight of the viewer, connoisseur and the *bhakta.*

The materials for study on all these are vast, varied and strewn all over the country. There is a massive, scattered, accumulation of literature. There are highly elucidating legacies left by eminent men in the shape of songs [*kritis, kirtans, padams, tillānas, jāvalis, bhajan* software, dance pieces, *yakṣagānas*, *kuravanjis*, etc.]. There exist architectural and sculptural marvels studded across the length and breadth of South India, besides friezes and a plethora of ancillary things in a measure that is unparalleled. Even *karaṇas* [standardized gestures] are sculptured in the temples of Thanjavur, Chidambaram and Kumbakonam and many other temples present exquisite inviting poses. The Mamallapuram caves, the temples of Thanjavur, Madurai, Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, Kanchipuram, etc., the wonderful arts of the periods of Cholas, Pandyas, Pallavas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagar samrajya, etc., are all to be brought together into a *magnum opus.*

An all-embracing, comprehensive study is a crying need and necessity. The *inter se* arterial connections and contributions are to be identified, correlated, collated and systematized to bring out the underlying, inherent life-current, soul and content of the interface of religious, spiritual, social and cultural phases for the benefit of posterity - researchers, students, artistes and the public. The temples, etc., which are international marvels might not stand vagaries of nature and man for many centuries more since the country is fighting even for elementary needs faced with an explosive population and limited resources.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The scheme is a taxing, long-drawn, mind-boggling work of vast parts, deep penetration, perplexing conception and baffling formulations. It calls for dedicated men and women free from the ills of the present. The crusading, pioneering spade-work of a Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, the clarity of thoughts of a Vivekananda, Venkatamakhin and Subbarama Diksitar, the selfless cultural vision of the Classical Trinity, Tanjore Quartete, Annamacharya and Purandara and dedication of cultural *tyāgis, yōgis* and dedicated souls, the genius of the *sthapatis* who built the wonderful temples of India and the finesse and artistry of the unmatched sculptors and jewellers of Bharat are all to be pooled together in a ***mahayajña!***

Such a massive, inter-active investigation is vital in the interest of the arts, to secure a composite feel of the pulse of the culture of the society, community and nation. Piecemeal endeavours have, of course, been made and in-depth studies done but they are in the nature of the elephant and the wonderful five entrepreneurs. An over-all, comprehensive programme is vital in the interest of arts in general and dance and music in particular. It is cost-intensive and calls for the services of learned men and experts. Only institutions can think of interesting themselves in such a scheme of vast proportions, the limit to which is sky-high! Much money flows down the drain on petty schemes of ephemeral values. A firm decision or move in this direction is urgently called for.

Is it feasible in the existing vitiated atmosphere of self before all else? Can it be done? Will it happen? If so, when and by whom?

St. Tyagaraja, in his *Kalugunā Pada* (*Purna Lalita*), reveals his intensely devotional enquiry with Sri Anjaneya, the foremost devotee of Sri Rama. 'Having entrusted everying to you, Rama takes His ablutions, offers neivedya to Sri Ranganatha and partakes the prasada served by Sita by her own hands while you recite sattvika puranas. You drink deep this Brahmanada regularly. Will I be fortunate to be ever blessed with such service?'

This is a passionate salutation to Sri Anjaneya. Sri Rama is seen taking food and Sita serving it. Service-conscious Anjaneya reads from cadjan leaves. (An elegant portrayal of the ancient concept that food is to be taken in an environment of *bhakti.*

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter VII

Bharatanāṭyam

'Gītam, Vādyam, tatha Nṛtyam trayam Sangītam uccyatē' - Sarṅgadēva

'Nṛtyapriyō, nṛtyanarto, nartakah sarvavilāsah' - Lord Siva as Sri Nataraja

'Uhamādhama Madhyamam narānām karmasaṅgraham I
Hitōpadēśa jananam dhṛtikrida sukhādikrit *II -Nāṭya Śāstra.*
[*Nāṭya* teaches good things to different categories of people – the *uttama,* the enlightened, the *madhyama,* the literate and the *adhama,* the illiterate.]

What connotes *bharatanāṭyam :*

Before commencing the bharatanāṭya recital, prayers are offered which invest the occasion with solemn dignity, elevated grace and profound respect for the art and the recital. It could even be said that the musically visual *ārādhana* has a positive impact on the audience in a far greater measure than singing the prayer on Sri Ganapati in concerts. Even so, may I reproduce here a relevant passage

'*Bharatakula bhāgya kalige*!
Bhāvarasānanda pariṇatakāre!
Jagadēha Mōhana kale!
Jaya Jaya raṅgāti
Dēvatē Dēvi!'

In Part III, the allegorical explanation of the concert programme once highlighted by Dr. Balasarawati, the *abhinaya* maestro, has been given. It may be read as part of this chapter. The bharatanatya artiste leads the audience during the dance recital allegorically into the *sanctum sanctorum* of a temple of the pristine beauty and size of Sri Brhadiswara at Thanjavur or Sri Minakshi at Madurai or any of the famous temples in the South of Bharat which are the treasure houses of arts, architecture and sculpture that hold out eternal messages to mankind, not only the Indian but the whole universe.

'Both the *Satapta* and the *Jaiminiya Brahmanas* describe the *gīta* and the *nṛitta* in heaven.' There are similar references in other ancient lore to indicate wide prevalence of dance and music. The artefacts unearthed during Mohenjadaro excavations [III millennium

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

B.C.E.], the incomparable work *Nāṭya Śāstra* of Bharata [I millennium B.C.E.] and the captivating *Śilappadikāram* of Ilango in tamil [II or VI century C.E.] are clear indications to show that India took to, adopted, was wedded to and had excelled in the divine arts of music and dance from very ancient times.

> "At one point in India's history, bharatanatyam was probably performed throughout the country [though it need not be assumed that it had then enjoyed the perfected improvements of the present]. As Hindu society declined, performing arts associated with Hinduism were looked upon with disfavour by Muslim and British invaders. Many of them were pushed into pockets of protection in South India. Lyrical dance postures, however, survived in cave drawings and sculpture while living dance forms survived in temples and in a few families." – AUFS 24

> 'If the flower were to represent the civilization, then the fragrance would be its culture. The uniqueness of the dance in India lies in the expression of freedom within the framework of tradition and that freedom is for us to cherish.'
> – Sudharani Raghupathy.

Bharatanatyam is expressive delineation or portrayal of the sum and substance, essence and fragrance, soul and spirit of the enlightened civilization and filtered efflorescence of the culture of Bharat as reflected in a condensed form in songs, *nṛitta* and *nṛtya*. It is fundamentally the outward expression and visual demonstration, delineation, exposition and expressive communication [otherwise than by word *vacika*] of what is conceived in mind or perceived by heart, of the embedded urges and subtle emotions and of the irrepressible passion for identity and reunion with the Ultimate! The dancer takes a *pada, tillāna, varṇam* or *kriti* and weaves out infinite alternative patterns to interpret and convey its meaning and message. It is the quintessence of the expressive faculties of a cultured artistic human being, nay even of the uninitiated. The limit is only the *manōdharmic* and artistic skill of the dancer and the aesthetic limits. If the classical musician takes to *saṅgatis* and *sancharas,* the dancer takes to overt presentation of them. Everyone would have seen ill-clad, ill-bred lambadi [tribal] children dancing exquisitely at other's door-steps just for a coin or a handful of rice with native gaiety, naivete and charm. How delightfully their nimble limbs translate the formulations in their abandoned minds into crude, untaught *nṛtta*? It would not only warrant but confirm by inductive inference that dancing is an age-old, inherent, inborn, native virtue of an Indian. It helps one to spot out the vital seeds and ingredients of the highly cultured and artistically developed dances of Bharat which find corroborative reflection profusely in many other fields like excavations, literature, sculpture, painting, social customs and habits. Dance is born of the remote, glamorous past, inherited and nurtured with sophistication in the glittering present projecting a vision for a verdant

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

future and is a symbolic expression of the varied emotional experiences of man or woman as conditioned by innate artistic intuition, inspiration and by time [*kāla*]. It broadly comprises:

Aṅgika [gestures, movements, etc.],	*vācika* [word],
Āharya [costumes and make-up] and	*sātvika* [mental].

There is a legend that Tandu Muni taught dance to Bharata and the art came to be named after him as *tāndavam*, the feminine part being *lasya*. There are other legends too to establish the divine origin it is invested with. Bharatanatya, some aver, is the name given during the thirties of the 20th century to what was earlier called *sadir, chinnamēḷam, sadir āttam, dāsi āttam,* etc. It could have earlier been a comprehensive term to indicate dances of the country and later on, with emphasis on and sophistication of regional variations, has been slowly assigned to and is now possessed by the comparatively technically developed art in the south. This presumption is logical but is to be substantiated. The fact that the comprehensive term has come to be exclusively applied now to the art as practised in South India is at once a tribute to its excellence as well as its significant, accepted leadership among the dances of Bharat. The term could be traced to sage Bharata Muni, author of *Nāṭya Śāstra,* or to the country itself to mean the exclusive art developed within its shores, or an anagram of *bhāva, rāga* and *tāla,* the fundamental ingredients, the expressive amalgam of which constitutes the noble art. *Nātya* is the happy fusion of *nṛtta* [graceful rhythmic movements of the dancer] and *nṛtya* [which is *nṛtta* impregnated with overt, standardized, understandable gestural translation of thought, speech and action, of *bhāva* and *rasa* as well as dramatic configuration and expression]. It is needless to mention that gestural communication is as old as human, nay, even animal life. When the eyes of the lover linger on passionately on the beloved, when the calf stretches out its neck to the lady of the house, when the child cries or beckons the mother, when the dog wags its tail, there is a clear unspoken message that is conveyed and exemplified in the respective acts. In spite of the perfected growth of languages, man has not yet forgotten, perhaps would never forget, his pre-historic inclinations and predilections to resort to or indent on gestures while making love, in summoning someone, in asking for water and everything though language is happily available. Mime or gestures are not only economic substitutes for language spoken or sung but are more effective instruments for communication! **It could be said that *bharatanāṭya* and *abhinaya* are but artistic extensions of enlightened, cultured communication skills, to adopt a modern phraseology in science and technology.**

Presumably bharatanatya as an art originally came into its place to significantly and artistically popularize epics etc., and slowly by virtue of sophistication, entered into a phase when solo performance became prominent and is now on its way to *status quo ante.* Bharatanatya is the cream of all civilized arts of Bharat in the field of communication, the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

sum total of its cultural effervescence, exuberance and its unsurpassed cerebral expression. The spiritual aptitude and artistic inclinations of the people took the art by its horns and led it to temples and places of worship for dedication as fit only for Gods to be demonstrated by the artistes as part of worship and accepted back and enjoyed as visual *prasāda* in which the heart and mind, ears and eyes get tuned with *advaitic* concentration, awe and wonder, joy and contentment conferring *śāntam, sowkhyam* and *śivam*! This need not have been a deliberate act since Indian attitude from the dawn of its culture has all along been invariably to dedicate everything that has aura and aroma to God and take it back as *prasāda* for sustenance, joy and blessedness.

The tamil prayer of old strikes a significant and eloquent *quid pro quo* with the Lord offering a sweet pudding made of milk, honey, dal and sugar and in return requests for enlightenment in prose, poetry, music, dance or drama. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, references to music and dance abound. Dasaratha gives instructions on the eve of the proposed crowning of Rama as *Yuvaraja* thus :

'Let all musicians skilled to play
And dancing girls in bright array
Stand ready in the second ring
Within the palace of the king.'

There are many such descriptions. Just one more. How was Ayodhya after the departure of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita?

Music and song and **dance** had ceased
And merriment and glee.

Well, since Ayodhya was the high seat of all arts, naturally song and dance had dominated the cultured life in it. What about Sri Lanka where the great Ravana ruled then! [How many Ravanas rule parts of the world now and yet no Rama or Krishna comes up or is visible in his promised *avatara*! Is it not relevant to note that arts bloom still! So, could it not be that arts thrive irrespective of the governance of a country?] Now it is Sri Hanuman who does the scouting in Sri Lanka.

'In Canto 10, Hanuman searches the harem of Ravana and finds his consorts in sound sleep, with one of them clasping the lute in loving embrace. [Probably she had found greater pleasure in its company and in fondly embracing it rather than the Lord of Sri Lanka!] Another had evidently danced till she had fallen asleep as she was found in the same attractive pose she had portrayed! [This indicates adoption of make-up and costumes.] Yet another dancer was sleeping clasping the vipanchi [veena]. The Saivite apostle too sings indicating veena artistes and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

yazh artistes being lined up separately – *veeṇaiyar orupāl; yaḻinar orupāl*' These indicate orchestral backing.

–[*Rāmāyaṇa:* Translation by Brinda Varadarajan.]

In *Mahābhārata,* Arjuna is seen appointed as dance tutor to Uttara, the Virata princess.

Thus music and dance pervaded the entire Bharat as early as the days of the *Rāmāyaṇa*! It could be said that history is not repeating itself in India but has stuck to its perennial musical and dance roots influencing the life of the people just the same way unchanged! Millennia later, Kalidasa and Ilango, for example, weave out brilliant episodes around dancers of lavish merit like Malavika in *Māḷavikāgnimitra* and Madhavi in *Śilappadikāram*. There are many such themes consistently refreshing the hunger for music and dance in Indian hearts. These *kāvyas* bristle with details on dance and music as if they are treatises on them!

Temples were the fulcrum of community activity till recent decades and is so still in specific places. Temples such as the one at Srirangam were defence bastions too against aggression. All the ways led to the temple as could be seen from ancient town-planning and accounts of community life, religious, social and political. Arts inextricably came to be centred around temples. Not only bharatanatya was no exception to it but it entered the sanctified precincts of the *sanctum sanctorum* and got wedded to rituals and services! The beauty of the art is that the Cosmic Dancer is the origin of it! There is spiritual and religious content and message in the art and this has enveloped it to such an extent that dance has survived in India in all its sublime nature for over two millennia.

Male dancers:

Male dancers were rare except to don restricted roles in *bhajans, bhāgavata mēlas, etc.* Kuchipudi and such others were male-oriented from inception. In recent years, women are taken to play female roles even in these. In fact, T. Sankaran, who was entirely involved with the system for a long time and has been in full knowledge of it, has opined :

> 'In the West, male dancers have their own costume. But the bharatanatya costume is special to the female figure. A bharatanatya dancer should have round beautiful breasts. That is one of the qualifications. Then a man comes and dances bare-chested, perspiration flowing down all over his body. Dance should also be pleasure to the eye. I find it offensive and indecent for men to perform!'

This is the opinion of one who may be taken as a confirmed hard-core traditionalist and classicist but none could fault or veto his view either. What he conceptualized was the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

de jure and *de facto* reigning classical model in sculptures in caves and temples. Goddesses are hailed even with reference to their breasts and women at concerts or homes were but images of such goddesses or *vice versa.* Pearl Buck's *Mother Earth* brings out how the lady had to squeeze out copious surplus milk left in her classical breasts presumably of Sankaran's description. Even in poetic descriptions, it has enjoyed its due or exaggerated emphasis. For instance, in *Śilappadikāram,* great poet Ilango in all his eloquence describes '*Alai neerādai, **malai mulaiyāga**, tāra peeriyāṛṛu, māri koondar kaṇṇakan...*' [Wave intensive waters are her costumes, **hillocks are her breasts**, river is her garland and dark clouds are her hairs. This was the scene where Indira Festival was to take place in Pumpuhar and music breaks apart fond lovers!] Indian poets and artistes, the connoisseur and the lay were conscious of the beauty of the breasts that suckle them with life-giving milk on their innocent advents in this world. It is no wonder that this love, respect and admiration got translated into sculpture, music, dance and epics.

What was the position in pre-historic times in regard to males v. females? On the figurines found in Indus Valley, David Kinsley in his *Hindu Goddesses* significantly but beautifully clarifies:

"Hundreds of female figures have been found which has prompted a scholar to proclaim that there should have been a figurine in each household. The number of male figures is insignificant. This indeed has a message. In arts, males have a role but that is very much low in comparison with the fair sex and it is but **fair to admit that males have not been honoured at any time since the dawn of mankind with the appealing terminology of 'fair sex'!"**

Probably god created the feminine element to be the principal repository of arts. A male taking on female roles has the merit of novelty and in this, scores of names [Anantanarayana Ayyar, Kuchipudi maestros, etc.] would come up to mind from the twin fields of drama and dance. Many may recollect the Shakespearean joke, 'Ladies and gentlemen, we profoundly regret the delay in commencing the drama. The heroine is having her shave and shall be ready in a trice!' Females donning the roles of males too enjoy like attraction and here too many names [a Bharataratna downwards] would suggest themselves. But the travails and tribulations of male dancers presenting male roles in dances, barring the select fortunate few, however talented, are well known. Surely there is no *raja marga* for them to reach the top successfully nor any bye-lane [*sandu*] either to take to. Public mind quickly responds and accords liberal receptivity to the dancing acumen in the female rather than the male. In a lesser field, one sees like adaptability, acceptability and popularity of women nurses and nursery teachers in contrast to their [apparently rigid?] masculine counterparts. No wonder, Sage Tiruvalluvar, in his couplets on Management, had said that

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

each work needs the commissioning of persons qualified and appropriate to it.

Times do change. The ancient, absorbing model of 'women having round beautiful breasts' as exemplified in cave and temple sculptures and paintings is perhaps a vanishing classical tribe. [Perhaps, it has vanished. Perhaps the advent of baby foods too may have something to do with the phenomenal change in classic models!] E. Krishna Ayyar's advent was a remarkable watershed in the history of bharatanatya. There are dance maestros from among males. Male dancers do appear in larger numbers now, though the liberal standards of perfection and artistic skills expected of and extended to women dancers invariably by the audience become unavailable to male dancers. There is a persisting, lurking female preference, a male phobia. Talented men do suffer a secondary reception and lack of opportunity. If Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam dances *Ānandamē*, *Ānandamē,* it is enchanting and soul stirring but when it is done by a male dancer with equal efficacy and perhaps better technical brilliance, the reception tends to be rather halting, if not altogether cold. It is probably taken for granted. Probably this is the governing reason for presenting women in circuses too in acrobatics! This psychological mood cannot be brushed aside or resisted! Perhaps it is better to surrender dominance to the fair sex and accept the *de facto*. Does not the entire blame rest with females having been honoured with the mischievous appellation of 'fair sex' and males ostracized!

Fine personality blest with normal stature, conducive, resilient and responsive body and limbs, a fair, bewitching face with a pair of sharp, expressive eyes, etc are *sine quo non* to be a successful bharatanatya dancer. Speaking [coquettish] eyes and a *bhāva* prone face are fundamental and in these, some are blessed by nature. Personality, stature, deportment and figure are blest as original gifts and artificial make-up is a poor substitute. Of course, spiritual lore may affirm that real beauty is the beauty of soul, which is the ultimate. Take any *slōka* or work, one finds copious references to the beauty of face and eyes. Nay that beauty is extended to identify the goddesses too like Minakshi, Visalakshi, Kamakshi, Chandramati, Kamalamba and Sundarakuchambal. Technical and cerebral brilliance of an artiste has but a secondary role to play in the context of this preliminary need. Talented or not, if one is blest with attractive features, he or she does face the audience with an initial advantage in graduation. Art is beauty and an artiste is expected to be, nay, necessarily has to be, beautiful as he or she projects the diverse aspects of life, which everyone yearns to be beautiful, refreshing, rejuvenating, educative, enlightening and elevating. Greater the refinement and grace, bonus marks are automatically extracted by the artiste from the audience. There is *prima facie* reluctance to pick out blemishes once the initial condition [*primum mobile*] is satisfied and the head and heart of the *rasika* [*sahṛdaya* – with mind and heart enjoying equanimity] cool down and knows only to **appreciate!**

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The people of Bharat have always claimed divine origin to all that is best and offered all that is best to the gods as *neivēdya* and received them back with joy and fulfilment as *prasāda*. It was presumably this inherent, innate, indescribable love of the Infinite that should have led in times past to dedicate dancing girls to the Lord, an extension of what is done on the stage now to offer prayers to gods symbolically. Indians were so enthralled and entwined with music and dance that they have prescribed them as mandatory items even for *pujas* done at homes:

Chatram chāmarayoryugam vyajanakam cadarsakam nirmalam
Viṇa bheri mṛdaṅga kahalakala gitam ca nṛtyam tatha...
–[*Siva Mānasa Puja*]

Temples, as mentioned above, were principal repositories of all arts and more particularly patrons of bharatanatya practitioners, who specialized hereditarily and came to be called most understandably and eloquently as *Dēvadāsis* [hereditarily dedicated servants of god] attached to individual temples. [The facts that ***deva*** *dasis* not infrequently slipped to become ***manushya*** *dasis* and that the institution was abused - with honourable exceptions - falling into evil days in course of time, should not deprive the virtuous institution of its glamorous orientation and its massive contribution to arts.] There have been brilliant instances of ladies hailing from this community attaining the highest standards of respectability such as Veena Dhanammal [1868-1938], Bangalore Nagarathinammal [1878-1952] and K.B. Sundarambal [1907-1980] – *Vide A Garland and Another Garland* for full accounts of their brilliant achievements. Manimekhalai, in one of the five tamil epics, is hailed as '*Deivam*' [goddess]. B. V. K. Sastry mentions the case of Bangalore Kamala whose house was the centre of activities in the fields of literature, music, dance, etc. and who was honoured with the rarest of rare honour, viz., *Uttara Yajñopavita*. Indian way of life had excelled in division of labour as could be seen from caste-based specialization and activities in every segment of life; and dance was no exception. Notwithstanding the demerits and blameworthiness of this system, it is an undeniable fact that it had helped arts and art-based activities to continue and survive. For long the community had been the sole monopolistic custodian and repository of *bharatanāṭya* with engrossing commitment to song and time, *rāga* and *laya, bhāva* and *rasa* and, in a word, bharatanāṭya, the supreme dance.

The institution had its heydays. The mighty king Raja Raja Chola, who constructed and presented the rare architectural marvel, the temple of Brhadiswara at Thanjavur, is said to have recruited about four hundred dancers for service in temples. A marvellous effort by an enlightened art-conscious king indeed! Most of the enlightened Hindu kings traditionally patronized artistes and arts in a lesser or greater measure creating **harems of**

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

arts, not of flesh. The artistes pursued their artistic avocation in the calm sequestered atmosphere of their homes, courts and temples and political upheavals hindered them not. With progressive political and moral demoralization, there was progressive, galloping demoralization among these artistes too. To end this moral anarchy, it is stated that during the tenure of Dewan K. Seshadri Ayyar, dance and dancers were banished from temples in Karnataka but music was allowed to reign supreme and even streets in Mysore were named after Tyagaraja, Ksetrajna, Seshanna and others. Dance in temples provided by *devadasis* was abolished in Tamil Nadu too by a special enactment in 1947. The fragrance of arts should not be degraded with any emphasis on the lapses of any individual community. [Bharatiya Patita Uddhar Sabha, established in 1984, in its surveys, has found out that there are twenty-three lakh prostitutes with fifty-one lakh children living in 275000 kothas. This shocking condition is mostly due to degradation in moral values, social and economic inequities, bursting population growth, over-crowding in urban centres and positively the films in the Post Kosala Committee period.. It has little to do with arts. When the tank bund is weak, it breaches and entire water meant for irrigation is lost. It is not the fault of rain, or of water or of the tank]

Asoka [273-232 B.CE] propagated Buddhism and morality through his rock edicts which stand to his eternal glory till today. The country is studded with sculptural marvels which have stood the vandalism of nature and invading hordes. Even so, conscious of the fact that practising human icons were insufficient to perpetuate the unexcelled art, dance postures [*karaṇas*], etc were beautifully etched in sculptures at the famous temples of Thanjavur, Chidambaram and Kumbakonam [and in a lesser measure in many other temples] ensuring immortality of the science and practice. Every temple tower boasts of myriad dance postures to constantly suckle children and feed elders of the rudiments of the art and reactivate in them the love of it. Above all, the Cosmic Dancer, hailed as Nataraja, King [or Emperor] of Dance, came down with His Consort to this land of arts proudly acclaimed as the *Punyabhumi* and took His abode at Chidambaram with his replica in every other temple of repute providing eternal inspiration and message. *Tēvāram, Tiruvācakam, Aṣtapadis, Taraṅgams, padams, kuravanjis, slōkas* and episodes from epics and ancient lore provide inexhaustible, luscious themes. *Abhinaya* constituted the prime menu. Torch-bearers, the Tanjore Quartette and subsequently others standardized the recital format or schedule.

Bharatanāṭyam, variously called *sadir, chinnamēḷam, kuravanji,* etc., is the *Sangamam* [confluence] of suggestive outward aesthetic expression of the elixir of spiritual and noble emotions, of *bhāvas* and *rasas*, which constitute the soul and symbol of culture,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and, more particularly, of the affluent artistic effulgence of India. In the *Bhāgavata mēḷa* and in *bhajans*, one sees the nucleus of the ancient art. The beauty lies in Bharata, in his ineffable work *Nātya Śāstra*, two millennia back, could lay down the code with rare insight, profound vision, immaculate clarity and perfection in detail. The actual presentation in times past presumably had varied from the sane and serene at temples to the erotic or subtle *śṛiṅgāra* at palaces for appropriate consumption. Occasions for dance recitals too were not many in times past, the art revolving mostly around temples and palaces and confined to festivals and celebrations. It should also be remembered that India was then only a land of villages and quasi-towns till the advent of the two World Wars.

❀❀❀

The ancient art cried for a change, a renaissance, a reformation. And it did come early as the twentieth century advanced. Though the art had passed through varied vicissitudes and chequered stages in the past, fortunately its *jiva* [soul] had stood intact, ever radiant, in strict conformity with the Indian adage that 'soul is immortal'... The rejuvenation of arts synchronized with what was happening outside their field and forum. Just then the nation was happily experiencing historic political, social, moral and cultural revival, upsurge and renaissance after a millennium of servitude, as Subramanya Bharati most eloquently thundered telling his countrymen in his song '*Ōrāyiram āṇḍu māṇḍu kiḍandapin*...' [after a thousand years of death-like servitude]. Every field of activity throwing out shackles of slavery presented galaxies of eminence, rather a surfeit of them, the like of which no other nation could have experienced. Few nations could boast of such an unprecedented avalanche, a lavish advent of eminence in every single field of life. It was unparalleled, a glorious phenomenon, quite magnificent indeed! Just as veena play has its variants as Mysore, Andhra and Karaikudi *bānis* and mrdangam play has its Thanjavur and Pudukottai *bānis,* bharatanatya has the orientation of Thanjavur, Pandanallur, Kanchipuram, Vahuvur, Bangalore, etc. The twentieth century had presented illustrious *nattuvanārs* who have planted their respective villages on the art map of India and have made them places of pilgrimage.

❀❀❀

The art of dance that was sulking, stagnating and losing its identity, charm and grandeur, in the context of far-reaching advances in every other field, picked up the threads and blossomed to ethereal standards and got placed back on the highest pedestal that was its due and overdue. Many contributed lavishly to the dynamic growth and prosperity of *bharatanāṭyam*. What was entirely in the hands of, and by force of custom treated as the monopoly of, devadasis passed on to men and women of status, rank,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

image, education and culture. Quite by an act of benevolent Providence, there came on the scene E. Krishna Ayyar [1897-1968], a lawyer by profession, a distinguished musicologist, dramatist and dancer, duly trained and qualified in music and dance. *Vide* pages 114-115 of *A Garland* for details. He was closely connected with Sangit Natak Akademy and the Music Academy, Chennai. He electrified the atmosphere wonderfully. [In memory of his unparalleled service to art, Sruti Foundation annually honours a distinguished artiste.] There came on the scene Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra, Chennai and others like Kalanidhi Narayanan with a *saṅkalpa* [resolve] to resuscitate, rejuvenate and elevate the practice of the wondrous art and *nātyāchāryas* of high calibre and renown like Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai capable of chiseling out the finer aspects of the art and raising it to pristine heights. The Music Academy, Chennai under the guidance of E. Krishna Ayyar conducted a decade-long [1931-40] richly rewarding and lively series involving the traditional community members. It brought to focus the inherent strength and vitality of the community in the field of art. This was the reason why veteran parliamentarian and connoisseur of arts S. Satyamurti was against many of the provisions of the Devadasi Abolition Act. Of course such objections did not prevail since the approach and objectives of the legislation were not based on the interests of Art but on social and moral grounds. The divine tree of Art once again gathered lavish luscious foliage and began shedding flowers of dazzling hues, beauty and fragrance and fruits worthy of being specifically reserved for the Grand Dames of Tamils, Avvaiyar and Karaikal Ammaiyar, [saints of fabulous renown whose lives carry thrilling episodes *vis-a-vis* fruits] and Lords Vinayaka and Subrahmanya both of whom competed for a single luscious fruit brought in by divine *vainika,* Narada. There have been enthralling innovations and inspired upgrading of music, orchestra, costume, ornaments, lighting, make-up, repertoire, style [*bāni*], stage, etc. As most of the new votaries are highly educated and talented, the well-researched and rejuvenated presentations are of breath-taking innovative order, at once captivating and tantalizing The pioneering Rukmini Devi's presentation of *Kuṟṟālakuravan*ji and *Kumārasambhavam* inspired others to present other *kuravanjis* and dance-dramas with varying degrees of success. The success of these depended upon troupes of trained dancers, infrastructure, musicians, orchestra, etc, all well-knit into a composite unit which only a few could command as Kalakshetra. The *nātyāchāryas* too took time to adapt themselves to radical changes in choreography and adoption of phases of Western stagecraft, etc., which Rukmini Devi and a few others brought in.

A word on the *gurukula* system that pervaded Kalakshetra needs be mentioned here. A like atmosphere had prevailed in the initial days of the introduction of music in the Annamalai University when teachers would go round to wake up sleeping pupils to start practising exercises and teachers would call them back at nights for *ad hoc, ex tempore* lessons. *Gurus* wanted *siṣyas* to prosper and *siṣyās* had nothing but undiluted respect to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

their preceptors. They lived for each other and base considerations had no place in that godly bondage. A like atmosphere prevailed in Kalakshetra. Shanta Dhananjayan who entered the institution at the age of seven recounts :

> 'I grew up with rich music which was part of the environment. Dance students had to take music as an ancillary subject. [Without music – *gītam* and *vādyam* – where is dance? How long can pure *nṛtta* hold the audience without music? Marriage without spouses, river without water, temple without idol, woman without beauty and meals without *pāyasa*!] There were great musicians. Mysore Vasudevacharya, for instance, would enquire us on our lessons, etc. and teach us a song or two – outside the classes and curriculum.'

There were diverse innovative presentations with varying degrees of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* .in the presentation such as those of Yamini Krishnamurti, Kamala, Vyjayantimala Bali, etc., followed by a brilliant cavalcade led by Adyar Lakshmanan, the Dhananjayans, Dr. Padma Subrahmaniam, Chitra Visweswaran, Sudharani Raghupati, Kalanidhi Narayanan, Lakshmi Viswanathan, etc. The atmosphere was such that Kalki Krishnamurti succinctly described it thus:

> **'Tamil Nadu has two wonders not found anywhere in the world – one, the indestructible rock-temples of Mamallapuram and the other, the great art of bharatanatyam. Bharatanatyam is sculpture come alive with intricate *hastas, mudras* and other gestural nuances. An art that captivates even the uninitiated.'**

Not a week passes now without *araṅgētrams*! In fact, the affluence in the art reaching its optimum at home [in India], is seeking scope and forums outside its native farm for horizontal growth to spread its wings. The art now lures and allures art-hungry elements in other continents, since such a subtle art had not been witnessed by them ever before. The migration of Indians has given a fillip to the popularity but this may be a passing phase since none could foresee what it would be once the first generation of migrants decreases. Spreading fast, conquering aspirants in other countries eager to imbibe and elevate themselves, the Indian art is happily getting internationalized, the principal artistes at home simultaneously struggling to preserve the pristine soul, purity and heritage intact. This is natural since inter-action with influences from abroad could not but have their impact as art is susceptible to absorb and accept what is easier, rosier or better. India and Indians have absorbed many such influences from pre-historic times and assimilated them all in the fashion of the epic saint digesting the demon, chanting '*Vātāpi jīrnōbhava!*' Now India has its massive hindustani music; the carnatic music has its *bhāṣāṅga rāgas* and so on. It

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

is in the way of life. The flower plant of bharatanatya in its prime puts on hundreds of buds but quite a few alone reach the acme of marvellous bloom, the rest falling off on the way. Even so, the art sees scores of buds of radiant hues disappearing from the field as if swallowed by quick sands and many a flower too is born to blush unseen!

Dance thematic dramas or **ballet** type of dances are not only seemingly but actually gaining momentum at the expense of solo ***abhinaya***, perhaps due to –

a. their capability to absorb larger numbers of artistes, the tribe of which swells day by day, with more and more families getting interested and involved, more schools for training becoming available and sabhas willingly or otherwise providing opportunities to perform; ['We have many group events and in these, plenty of students get roles, small or substantial', says V.P. Dhananjayan. It has universal application.] Faced with the availability of a number of well educated, fair and talented artistes, surely there is need to absorb them all. The theme is the only one that could be elastic '*Nalladōr veenai seidu, adai nalaṅgeda puḻudiyil eṛivadundō?*', queried the national poet. Even so, the artistes who graduate could not be laid aside and ignored!

b. *Nāṭya Śāstra* was written when India had perhaps just a ten million population; when Krishna Ayyar and Rukmini Devi made their advent, it was about five hundred millions; now it is an alarming thousand millions!. Surely arts should provide space for the interested, the innovative, the inspired, the educated or the wealthy and perhaps the unemployed without anything else to do . And it is slowly becoming a status symbol. And having taken the strenuous training, surely they would all be interested in standing to the glare of cameras on stages. It is a question of demand and supply.

c. their characteristic fuller and glittering stage presence and coverage, charming movements in singles and groups and in all geometrical directions, in different tempos and their synchronizing or varied portrayals by different artistes concurrently or otherwise in varying numbers as if celestial nymphs are on the stage or portrayed on the screen;

d. the absorbing glamour, glitter and thrill of several fair-faced, cultured nymphs in attractive attire and dazzling ornaments on tip-toe, parading in breath-taking tempo and direction, elegantly moving, hopping, sailing and jumping like antelopes drawing the eye of the audience ever on focus and alert but in a **relaxed entertainment mood and phase;**

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

e. their demand on sensory organs, mind and intellect of the audience being less exacting, in marked contrast to the unlimited entertainment potential than the more intellectually demanding *bhāva abhinaya*, which demands keen attention, analysis of each pose and assimilation in the dual context of the lyric *vis-a-vis abhinaya.* All the sensory organs are to be harnessed and kept on full alert for *abhinaya.* In ballet, the mood of audience is relaxed; rather, it could be said that the pleasure is conferred and not always earned; There is more entertainment value in ballet and dance dramas and more intellectual menu in *abhinaya* and solo presentation since the attention is fixed and is in full focus.

f. the indent they place on the standard of expertise, grade and merit of each and every individual participating artiste being less demanding [perhaps it may be that if ballet is graduation to each dancer, *abhinaya* is post-graduation];

g. their insistence on beauty, deportment, looks, expression, standard of expertise, performance and presentation for each and every individual artiste being less, since the focus of the audience gets spread out and distributed unlike *abhinaya* where the lack of or blemish in anything and everything gets immediate cognizance and focus. Rama or Sita, Krishna or Radha in *abhinaya* has to be supreme fully in every leg and aspect of the art but in a dance-drama or ballet, the intensity of such expectation is less. The condition of each dancer in ballets is akin to bridal couples in marriage *mēlas* wherein scores of marriages are held together while in *abhinaya,* it is the traditional marriage where all eyes are riveted on the dancer[s] alone. **Positively *abhinaya* or solo *nāṭya* is more demanding of individual artistes than in ballets:** and

h. solo performer has to depict many roles, present multi *bhāvas* in quick succession, etc., which demands a higher level of training, sustaining power to last for hours than one among the troupe where everything is shared. Solo is like running an individual family while ballet or dance drama is akin to a joint family.

Phylogenetically gestures are older than speech. With the development of languages, gestures naturally recede to the background but do not disappear. Man is found incapable of dispensing with them totally. [Why, even animals practise it quite often.] Musicians are

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the best specimen; children, old people, rustics rely as much on gestures to emphasize and highlight as the spoken word or to graphically illustrate emotions. Thus, man or woman, people continuously do practise elementary *abhinaya* as unclassified artistes in their normal lives without being conscious of it all. Not infrequently elders would be seen teasing daughters and grand daughters with profound affability, '*Ennaḍi*, dance *ādarē! Abhinayam pōrum, viṣayattukku vā*' - [What's the matter, you're dancing? Stop *abhinaya*; come down to the point!] This element will survive outside the theatre whether it continues on the dance stage or not.

With democratic decentralization [I hope the term could be extended to indicate the upsurge in mass practice, wide exposure and elastic scope and appeal of the art as well as diversified styles, innovative modes, opportunities and occasions besides the frequent use of dance and its entertainment potential and value for corporate, etc., purposes], the art has been throwing out positive trends for steady growth. And as it does, demonstrative and entertainment values score over classically subtle, aesthetic and intellectual values. Nṛtya Chudamani V.P. Dhananjayan writes:

> 'Changes are imperative. Bharata, the ultimate mighty authority on Indian art and culture, himself quotes :
> *"Ākṛtyā chēṣṭayā chinnei*
> *Jātya vigjayaya vastutaha*
> *Swayam vitharkya artavyam*
> *Hastābhinayam bhudheti".*

Intelligent scholars should create fresh things according to the form, behaviour, symbol, the genetic group the object belongs to, the time and place of the subject portrayed, etc. This is a licence to create and bring forth changes in our performing arts too.

But should we attempt "a change for the sake of mere change" or should a change be allowed to take place in its natural evolutionary process? Should we uproot a flourishing, flowering and blooming live tree and replace it with a grafted one just for the sake of change? To quote national poet Bharati again, '*Nalladōr veenai śeidu adai nalam keda puḷudiyil eṛivadundō*?' [Having got up the eloquent musical instrument, veena, will anybody spoil it by throwing it into a dust bin?]. The vibrant art has stood the test of times, has kept its soul in full glow all along and has shown that in them lie the seeds of eternity. That being so, just to cater to passing, ephemeral moods, to secure instant appreciation from uninitiated, or to promote and provide opportunities for larger numbers of trainee-artistes, or for satisfying sponsors and audiences looking for lighter entertainment, rather than for classical

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and intellectual menu, whether it is prudent or desirable to sacrifice the soul of the art, diluting its spirit and deal it with a *coup d' grace*? The mood of the times may necessitate changes for what they are worth since every troupe has the need to gain individuality and present its innovative speciality or inspired novelty. Artistes are presumed to be eager to dance what is fresh and the audience is presumed to appreciate what is new. Theatres are big; dais is large; participating artistes are numerous; sponsors or sabhas take pride in announcing ever-fresh themes and presentation, applause waits to greet everything and an anxious media is ready to cover.

Mukhābhinaya [facial delineation of emotions] to portray *bhāvas* which cannot normally be taken over by body movements and solo performances as a percentage of the total number of concerts are positively in *avarōhana.* In presentations by groups, admitting profound capability, innovative choreography and skilled expertise, surely one cannot tolerate half a dozen Chandramatis wailing to the song '*Appā mahane Lōhidāsā! Kāttirkku pōnāyōdā*?' all presenting *mukhābhinaya* however eloquent it could be. The pressure of numbers rules out, weeds out and sacrifices whatever could be kept out or dropped to whip up or keep up tempo, interest and attention. What the face is expected to project, body movement may not, of course, be expected to arrogate to itself and in that context, the only choice is to ignore, bypass and delete and it is done!

It may be a cry of despair or of desire, for one seeking to arrest the trend! As several good things were bidden good bye such as *gurukulavāsa, kalakṣēpa* and drama, perhaps many of the valued, time-honoured features and ingredients may have to be lost.

Śṛiṅgāra: Misconception dispelled :

In the enchanting parlance of music, dance and drama, the key theme for exhilarating *bhāva, rasa* and *sāhitya* pertain to *śṛiṅgāra*, which naturally enjoys primacy and dominates taking the enviable prime slot. Songs abound in *śṛiṅgāra bhāva*; dance revels in it; drama enriches itself with it; and it is positively the most coveted word of the populace and the artistes. Normally, it is taken to mean eroticism in substance and application, **which it is not necessarily.** Several words in sanskrit do not have equivalents in english such as *dharma. Śṛiṅgāra* is another. It is a complex word with much deeper connotation than what the bland word 'eroticism' connotes and conveys. Here is a learned exposition from the pen of the late Jivan Pani, described as a dancers' scholar :

> 'Let us consider how *sthāyi bhāvas* [permanent mental condition] and their corresponding *rasas* are translated into english. The *sthāyibhāva* of *karuṇā*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

rasa [compassion], is *sōka* [sorrow] and that of *bhayānaka* [tremble] is *bhaya* [fear]. *Śṛiṅgāra rasa* corresponds with the *sthāyibhāva* called *rati* [delight]. One of the other connotations is sex act.. Indologists rightly prefer *rati* [delight]. The corresponding logical *rasa* should be delightful, or rather, **ecstatic and not erotic.** *Nāṭya Śāstra* is categorical in this when it states that all that is sacred, bright and worth beholding is comparable to *śṛiṅgāra* :

'Yatkinneiloke suci madhvam śṛiṅgārēna upamiyate'.

Yet Indologists have preferred erotic in preference to ecstatic and the anomaly can be explained only when the Indian way of using sex **as a symbol** in arts and religion is comprehended. Meaning of *rati* is intense desire, or rather aspiration, of a *bhakta* to unify himself with the Ultimate Being, the only *Puruṣa* [male] in the Universe since all else is but feminine. Our highly involved dance traditions are *per se* ritualistic and **śṛiṅgāra should be of the *dharma śṛiṅgāra* kind which could be anything but erotic.'**

The misconception generously created by the familiar, casual use and understanding of eroticism as the meaning of *śṛiṅgāra* is thus to be discarded unless in specific cases of *jāvalis* or *padams* it has relevance. Because of the undue weightage given to the figment of eroticism, a view is held that male *nātyāchāryas* not infrequently find it difficult to teach *śṛiṅgāra* to girls who have reached the age of understanding.

'Adi Sankaracharya describes Mother Goddess in *Soundaryalahari* with anatomic lucidity and clarity to bring out the Loka Mata as the most perfect ideal woman. It is not eroticism by any account!', says the eminent T.S.Parthasarathy. Kalanidhi Narayanan says that *śṛiṅgāra* means love but that includes *bhakti śṛiṅgāra, vātsalya śṛiṅgāra* apart from *rati śṛiṅgāra.* V. P. Dhananjayan says, "*Śṛiṅgāra* is one of the *rasas* that touches the heart, elevates one spiritually and leaves a cherishable feeling in mind. Among the eight *rasas* cited in *Nāṭya Śāstra, śṛiṅgāra,* which arises from the perception of love, stands first. **The use of the word 'eroticism' as an equivalent parallel is misleading.** Though the contents of *Gīta Gōvinda* are full of amorous dalliances, it should be noted that it was written by saintly Jayadeva who was imbued with nothing but *bhakti.* When we read these, do we ever get erotically aroused or do we experience aesthetic beauty of the poet's expansive imagination? *Śṛiṅgāra* is the unfathomable beauty in creation. It is known as *Rasa Raja*! Emotional love lyrics have been the result of, instrumental to, spiritual attunement. *Bhakti* is the only other word for it." Subtlety and artistry are *sine quo non* to portray *śṛiṅgāra bhāvas* as India is wedded to certain discipline for acts in public.

Bhava & Rasa:

In *Nāṭya Śāstra*, Bharata defines *rasa* as what is tasted and enjoyed and remarks

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

further that anything without *rasa* is not worthwhile. [No wonder *rasam* is an important dish in Indian food and there are as many culinary varieties of it as *rasas* [emotions] listed out by the great Bharata] He lists out eight *rasas* viz., *śṛiṅgāra* [ecstasy, eroticism], *hāsya* [humour], *karuṇa* [benevolence], *raudra* [fury], *veera* [bravery], *bhayānaka* [fear], *beebhatsa* [disgust] and *adbhuta* [wonder]. The *bhāvas* which generate these *rasas* are correspondingly *rati, hāsya, śōka, krōdha, utsāha, bhaya, jugupsa* and *vismaya.* He also arranges the eight *rasas* in pairs. He adds *śantam* to the list. *Bhāva* is the reservoir or the tank and *rasa* is the water let out for irrigation of the *ayacut* [irrigated belt], which is audience. *Nṛtya* is the sluice through which water [*bhāva*] flows which when it reaches the *ayacut* becomes *rasa* even as grass taken in by cow turns into milk when it comes out. *Bhāva* is the cause or experiment and *rasa* is the result or experience. *Bhāva* is action or work and *rasa* is enjoyment. The Queen of Renaissance in Dance, Rukmini Devi observes that art to survive must have sincerity, inspiration and *bhāva* and adds that '*bhāva* is the expression of our feelings; what we feel we express and nothing can be expressed externally if there is nothing inside. *Sans bhāva* the whole thing becomes mimicry!'

Bhāva and *rasa* are, in connotation, twins like word and its meaning, fire and smoke or flower and fragrance. It may well be said that *bhāva-rasa* and word-meaning are inseparable twins, much more integrated, consanguineous collaterals than others. Could they be compared to the Siamese twins, Chang and Eng [1814-1874]? No. These twins were united only in waists and lived as twins. But *bhāva* and *rasa* arise out of a single action, connote and denote sequential presence of the other even as the song goes '*Nān pārtadellām nī pārka vēṇḍum; nī pārtadellām nān kāṇavēṇḍum*'. [Whatever I see, you shall be seeing; whatever you see, I shall be seeing.] *Ipso facto* where *bhāva* is, *rasa* is and *vice versa.* 'He sang/she danced/the child acted projecting intense *bhāva*, I shed tears; I could not resist them', confides the *rasika. Bhāva* leads to, instills, inspires, creates, invokes and injects *rasa.*

Could *rasa* alone exist without its elder twin? As *bhāva* is the cause and *rasa* is the effect, *rasa* could not *prima facie* appear on its own. Could there be a *bhava* that does not instill any *rasa*? If there is one, how could it earn the label *bhāva*? 'I am the seed for all beings', said Lord Kṛiṣṇa [*Gita* X 39]. *Sans* seed, there is no offspring and even so, *rasa* could not appear without causation. Could both be created simultaneously like Adam and Eve, the first fruit and seed, etc.? Possibly not, since here, *rasa* could flow out only if and when the flood gates of *bhāva* are opened even if they be twins. Musician brings out the *bhāva* of *saṅgita* and *sāhitya*; the dancer or the actor portrays the *bhāva* exquisitely. In all these, the *bhāva* flows from the dais to the auditorium and the one who appreciates it is from among the audience. He enjoys the *rasa,* and only then, gets elevated to the status of a *rasika.* Only when *bhāvas*, impounded in a song, script, *abhinaya*, sculpture,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

etc., get released and manifested, the *Rasa Tarangini* flows out. Only when one floats in the ocean or reservoir of *bhāvas*, *rasas* get acknowledged, appreciated and applauded and the source and origin, viz., *bhāva, ipso facto* gets recognition. Where there is no *rasa*, it denotes *bhāva* too is absent. When *rasa* is not accepted, assimilated and appreciated, *bhāva* is wasted on a person who is not only not a *rasika* but is only an animal without tail as Bhartrhari would call him. To quote a common phrase, it will be pouring water or raining on a buffalo!

But a musician, dancer or actor can be both the source of *bhāva* and a *rasika* enjoying the fruits of his/her own output. Tyagaraja calls himself a *bhāvuka.* It is the state of trance or inspired existence *in excelsis* where absolute art takes over the artiste and the conscious self is silenced and the ego gets stamped out! [Pardonably I may mention that when I played the role of heroine in *Samsāra Bandham* at the Museum Theatre on October 8, 1944, overcome by emotion, I almost swooned in the act of committing suicide.]

T.S. Parthasarathy avers that Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar would begin screwing up his shirt buttons or endlessly shuffle his shirt sleeves whenever he entered the inspired world and forgot himself in his *manōdharmic* flights in concerts. Sudharani Raghupathy told *Sruti* that at the India International Centre, New Delhi in 1986 when asked to interpret the dictum 'Everything is one whole' before the most distinguished audience, she presented her version and when it was over, 'I was weeping and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya was also weeping. The experience had been overwhelming. It had moved her deeply.' Here the *rasānubhava* was actually shared both by the dancer and the *rasika*. Musicians of eminence like Madurai Mani Ayyar and Musiri Subramanya Ayyar were classical examples who enjoyed the *rasa* themselves too while presenting *bhāva*-pregnant music. The cook in the kitchen tastes just a specimen sample to know whether the dish has come out well. But artistes of the eminence of Tyagaraja, Musiri Subramania Ayyar and Madurai Mani enjoy the entire rendition along with *rasikas.* This happens with many dancers as well. They enter into a trance-like situation. It is an exhilarating timeless experience which baffles narration or description. The *slōka* extracted below outlines the sequential action and confirms that *rasa* is but the product of *bhāva* :

'Yatō hastah tatō dṛstiḥ
Yatō dṛstih tatō manaḥ
Yatō manas tatō bhāvo
Yatō bhāvas tatō rasaḥ'

Bharata, in his matchless work, further states that Bṛhma enunciated only eight *rasas* and that he added *śāntam* to make it nine [*nava rasas*].

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Annexure to Chapter VII

Madras Devadasi [Prevention of Dedication] Act, XXXI of 1947

This is in the nature of presenting some clarification on the Devadasi issue which had a social, religious and art background. Devadasis in Tamil Nadu belonged to the Isai Velalar community, which term signifies cultivation of and prosperity in music. What a beautiful conception is it? It was truly bountiful in fact and practice too. It is to be taken that not all females of the community could be or were dedicated to temples to provide dance and perform some minimum services during festivals and in some cases during the daily *pujas*. Those dedicated received some payments in kind or cash or both either from the temples or from big landholders or had lands called Devadasi Inams which were enjoyed by the dedicated members hereditarily with right of succession.. [It is also said that pregnant women in extremely rare cases suffering acutely used to take a vow to dedicate their first daughters to the temple to secure easy delivery.] Barring enlightened individuals, most of the members led, by custom or force of circumstances, an indecent life. Of course, a few ladies had been taken into the households of rich landowners as permanent concubines and these had an enjoyable, regulated life and their progeny were well off. To cite an instance from an epic, Madhavi, the danseuse was supported by the rich merchant-prince Kovalan and she was truthful to him. Others were left to fend for themselves and mostly they led a discreditable life. Male members, other than those who were professionally well trained as *nattuvanārs*, nagaswara artistes or dramatists, enjoyed just a minimum influence and most of them attended to sundry works in most of the households.

Music, dance and drama were the chosen monopoly of devadasis which were legated and inherited as inalienable family legacy. The offshoot of these was that in both nagaswara rendition, dance and dramas members of the community had monopolistic hold. Whatever be the social stigma, the specialization of the arts by the devadasi community ensured the continuous virility and vibrancy, purity and health of music and dance. Amidst apparent moral squalor, arts flourished. It was strange but was true. Conditions were such that but for this hereditary, monopolistic legacy, arts would have positively been stifled and perhaps their souls would been sniffed out. Arts were their chosen fields of specialization and where patrons of arts were rich, those families economically flourished well. Significantly many ladies of the community had received education needed for their artistic pursuits. Muddu Chandrarekha of Thanjavur was a specimen of the enlightened segment. Bangalore Nagaratnammal had addressed the All India Sanskrit Conference. Ulsoor Venkatarasani had authored the book *Sāra Saṅgraha Bharata.* In fact, it had been noted that devadasi women were much better off in this respect than other middle class women since there was

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

need. Devadasis wedded to gods *ipso facto* had no widowhood. *Nitya sumaṅgali* is a term that came to be attached to them. Birth of female child, contrary to the conditions prevailing even now among some other communities, was understandably an occasion of immense joy and festivity while the birth of male child was unwelcome.

European settlers presumably enjoyed their dance and music to whatever extent feasible and a few administrators reportedly desired to implement the Contagious Diseases Act also to contain venereal diseases. [The present day propaganda to prevent AIDS was actually foreseen then.] There were constant representations to abolish the Devadasi system but the entire community of devadasis vehemently protested by holding conferences at many centres and taking out processions. When in 1924, the Central Legislature was moved to abolish the system, it was pointed out by the Government of India that the dedication of girls to deities was confined to the Madras Presidency [Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala], parts of Bombay and a few other places and that the move should be with the States but promised all support. In Madras Presidency, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi was a pioneering crusader to abolish the system. 1927 was the year which could be named 'The Year of Devadasis' as it saw pressures for abolition with Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddi as the crusading fountain-head and counter pressures spearheaded by T. Doraikannammal, Secretary of the Devadasi Association. Thousands of copies of the Devadasi Memorial were sent and they appealed to the Press and the Public for support. In 1929, adding the new Section 44A to the Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926, the lands held by devadasis were enfranchised [given full rights] on condition of performing the services. Finally by the Madras Devadasi [Prevention of Dedication] Act XXXI of 1947, the system of dedication to temples was abolished. The devadasi community ceased to have the ordained access to temples but this affected a minority of the community only and the rest continued with arts, etc., as before. The arts of music, dance and drama slowly spread to other communities too and soon the exclusive monopoly of the community to arts vanished though nagaswara still continues to be its sphere of influence.

Kṛṣṇa Nī Bēganē Bārō

This song is sung in slow tempo at concerts and dances as well at homes to bring out the beauty of *rāga*, lyric and *bhāva*. The lyric in very slow tempo commands, 'Krishna come on quickly' which should normally, perhaps always, necessitate fast tempo only. Swami Haridas Giri expressed surprise at the Dasas making it in slow tempo and wondered [of course, humourously] whether they intentionally sang it in slow tempo to avoid extra physical exertion and even risk and injury to future dancers with bulky bodies doing *aḍavu*, etc. if sung fast!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter VIII

Confusion in the Music Arena!

Introduction :

Alas, what a word it is! Confusion covers the state of mind of a person or body of persons in a particular context in respect of a particular point where truth battles with untruth and fact differs from assumption or presumption. Everyone carries a load of convictions, notions and beliefs. In confusion, there is an uncertain blend or fusion of the unreal with the real, the false with the truth as in the case of rope and snake or confrontation with parallels and alternatives. In the *Mahābhārata*, King Salian partakes of the gala dinner *en route* to Hastinapura under the impression that it had been arranged by his fond relatives, the Pandavas and finds too late that it had been treacherously arranged by inimical Duryodhana and that he had unwittingly allowed himself to be duped necessitating his joining just that army which he wanted to fight against! Beloved Jawarharlal Nehru was the architect of the lauded *Panchsheel* document co-authored by China but what that country did to compensate the noble gesture is a fact of history. Likewise our Prime Minister went on a great-hearted bus diplomacy with genuine intentions to a neighbouring country that was once part of this land but that treacherous neighbour took advantage of the occasion to infiltrate with inimical intent his troops into this country. Were King Salia, Nehru and our Prime Minister confused? No, **they were cases of mistakes of facts and intentions,** not confusion though there may be an element of confusion in the case of Salia. The mist of confusion may get cleared sooner or later, and not infrequently never, depending upon the author, time, situation and the theme. There is an element of, to borrow a technical word quite current in musical circles, *manōdharma* [is it *manas-adharma*?] too.

Is confusion the same as mistake of fact? A crucial point it is for consideration at this juncture. 'I'm sorry, by mistake I omitted to sing the song of Bharati' or 'The omission was due to a mistake of fact' is not an uncommon reply. Here is an extract from the judgment of the High Court, Chennai in W.P. 502/1960:

'Kerr on *Fraud and Mistake* [seventh edition] notices that mistake has been said to be some unintentional act, omission or error arising from unconsciousness, ignorance, forgetfulness or misplaced confidence. Mistake of fact is a mistake not caused by neglect of legal duty.: Lord Moulton had said that a mistake means that parties intending to do one

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

thing have by unintentional error done something else. It is similar to the vidwan going to Tyagaraja Sabha which he finds is steeped in darkness instead of going to the Tyagaraja Vidwat Sabha, the gates of which are kept open for his arrival and concert! Just as a mistake of law is not admissible in courts, a mistake of *rāga, tāla* or *sāhitya* is not permissible in a vidwan. He cannot plead mistake in respect of these as a cloak for his ignorance. Buckly L.G. has said, 'A mistake exists when a person erroneously thinks that one state of fact exists.' The one-act drama described below is a specimen of this condition. If the vidwan says, 'I forgot to bring the violinist', it is not a mistake but is callous negligence or an omission. Negligence or ignorance is not a mistake.

The above shows that a mistake of fact arises in respect of an act done or omitted to be done. When the vidwan sings an inauspicious song at a wedding, it is not mistake or confusion but serious carelessness or negligence. Confusion arises only when confronted with alternatives and the inability to decide on this or that! Mistake is a *fait accompli,* a postmortem of an act or omission while confusion is static, confused stagnancy of mind and failure to take it by horns and take the plunge! Now some cases are brought in from diverse situations in the musical empire.

Confusion on *rāga* and musician : There is the well-known joke on the confusion in regard to classical *rāgas*. The musician was delineating *rāga Darbār* when the *rasika* whispered to Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, 'He brings in shades - *rāga chaya* - of *Nāyaki* in his rendition! He is confused!' Prompt was Ayyar's mischievous retort punning on the words *darbār* and *nāyaki*, 'How can there be a *darbār* [king's court] without the presence of *nāyaki* [queen]?' Here, if the vidwan blends shades of one *rāga* in the other, he is possibly negligent or ignorant. It is neither confusion nor mistake. But if the *rasika* is wrong, then it is confusion. Someone hears a voice on the radio and confidently queries, 'Is it not GNB singing?', which it is not. Suppose the addressee, unwilling to exhibit ignorance, innocently but indecisively nods, the first gentleman proudly bursts out, 'I know; how can I mistake his vibrant voice so dear to me?' Ego, thy name, in this context, is ignorant vanity! Here his mind presumably carries a hazy memory of the veteran but not his music, nor even his voice. He is guilty of confusion if he is in *bonafide* belief and is not confused if he just hazards that presumption out of vanity or a hidden urge to exhibit knowledge of him spun out of mental vacuum. It is like a scoundrel stopping a stranger on the road and asking with ulterior motives, 'Are you not Mr. Govind?'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Confusion in count : Kambar, the foremost poet of unparalleled eminence and author of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in tamil, had in Ambhikapati, a brilliant poet-son, who chooses to fall in love with a reciprocating intellectual princess. The angry king stipulates, in due deference to the distinguished parentage of Ambhikapati, that if he composes *impromptu* a hundred songs without any tinge of *śṛiṅgāra* he gets the hand of the princess and if he fails, he pays it with his head. Ambhikapati commences the marathon musical ordeal with native conviction and natural confidence. Invocation over, he proceeds. Quite soon, the cascade of ninety-nine songs of lustrous beauty ends. Just that last song and the lovers would be happily united and blessed. Lo! What happens? Confusion, is thy second name Greek tragedy!

The princess, an icon of silken charm and dazzling beauty fit only for royalty [What is the alternative in a democracy for royalty? Could it be a junior minister?], in delirious joy, in confident anticipation of the approaching finale with the hundredth song flowing out just in a little trice hence, appears on the balcony with **fragrant garlands** [Not copies of my book - Volume IV- please. Had she taken them, they would have exchanged marital garlands and the horror would have been averted!] ready to climb down, embrace and place them around his poetic neck no sooner than he completes that inescapable last, yes, just that mandatory song without eroticism. Is not that cerebral boy of an immortal poet capable of singing that last song too? Who dares to doubt? But her enchanting image, passionate countenance and the anxious garlands waiting in a pair of the loveliest Chola hands decked with richly designed native bangles ready to fall around his neck just the next second, tickles his poetic emotions, whips up his arrested passion, clouds his reasoning and in a precious trice, thinking that he has completed the full century of songs, wrongly counting, in **confusion**, the invocation song also, pours out a song [hundredth by the real count but the hundred and one in his **confused miscalculation-packed mind**] full of *śṛiṅgāra!* Garlands in those shapely hands dry up instantaneously; the entire court stands dazed and the mentally demolished courtiers give vent to pathetic cries of grief in unison totally shattered. The sharp deadly axe, just then taken off to be acquitted of not tasting blood and ready to be cast away, comes into the hands of the rugged chopper and falls on the fine cylindrical neck of the innocent poet leaving the forlorn princess standing like a lifeless statue of tragedy in an ocean of bloody tears unable to command or retrieve that little energy even to cry or whisper blaming harsh fate! Ambhikapati was no Henry VIII, nor was he a Mangal Pandey dying for the cause of his country. A good poet, son of a great poet, his fault lay in allowing passion to take tragic hold of his fertile mind just at the critical, crucial moment. The finest flower to bloom and shed lustre and fragrance in the domain of Muse, a Kambar II in the making, should he be destined to fade out so young and so tragically? All born of an absurdly petty **confusion in count,** a grievous error that a kindergarten alumnus would be ashamed to commit! Ninety-nine songs had been of no

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

avail. [After battling for three hours of high class play, there is a tie. All that went before is washed out of recognition. The game is decided by tie-breaks of just twelve balls which may go either way. So it happened with those brilliant 99 and he was declared out!]

Confusion in keeping time is seen even in concerts when the principal artiste goes on elaborating, prolonging *swara prastāra* or the accompanist [*pakka vādyakāra*] the agony of unrelished solo *ad infinitum* [without keeping count of time] to become *puccāh vādyakāra*! Confusion, who gives life to thee! In a particular meeting, the initial introduction was unduly long and tedious, that finally when called upon 'to give his address', the principal speaker in visible disgust, just gave his home address in detail and quietly resumed his seat!.

Confusion in signature [*mudra*] of songs arises where it is one and the same. There arises difficulty in identifying the true authorship of the song. Thus when Irayiamman Tampi and Swati Tirunal Maharajah both adopted the *mudra* 'Padmanabha', some songs of the former got credited to the folio of the latter influenced by the rank, benefit of doubt being cast in favour of the dignitary! This has happened in other cases too. It has happened to the *varṇam* of Kothavasal Venkataramier. Margadarsi Sesha Ayyangar is said to have adopted Kosala as his ***mudra*** owing to his stay at Ayodhya which is very much doubted. Could it not be due to his love of the *Rāmāyaṇa*? [Secularists may feel happy!] There is confusion on the real reason for adopting that rare *mudra*.

Kṣetrajña [Poet of Exalted Love: [17th Century] - Nativity? Kṣetrajña, the greatest of *padam* composers is stated to have been born at Muvva about eight kilometres from Kuchipudi in Divi taluk of **Srikakulam district**. Dr. P. Venugopala Rao has his different opinion on this. Muvvagopala is the signature to his *padams*. [*Vide A Garland*]. C.R.Srinivasa Ayyangar has expressed a view in The *Hindu* dated December 5, 1923. that Muvvagopala was his patron deity 'who graces the shrine at his native village Muvvapuri in **North Arcot District**'. Mannargudi Sabhapathy Ayyar too signed his *padams* as Muvvagopala as he was born in the village of Muvvalur and both composed in telugu. 'It is difficult for connoisseurs to distinguish the authorship of their *padams*.' This is apt to create bonafide confusion.

Confusion in style: This may arise when the **style** of composition varies. Thus among the *navagraha kirtanas* of Muthuswami Diksitar, those on Rahu and Kethu are singled out for doubt about their real composer since their style, prosody and music are all comparatively too simple for Diksitar and they are considered as not from his pen! People

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

believed the song *Nīducaraṇamuṭē* (*Simmēndra-madyamam*) as the composition of Tyagaraja's as it bore that signature but was of 'Tiger' Brothers! The style lent support to the wrong credit earlier.

Confusion in regard to *kṣetra* [place] : The immortal composer of *Gīta Gōvinda* [Songs Celestial] was born at Kindubilwa. The seventh *aṣtapadi* mentions *Kindubilwa samudra Sambhave*. Orissa and Bengal vie with each other claiming him as its son as there is a place of that name in each. Paramahamsa Sadasiva Brhmendral is reported to have attained simultaneous *samādhi* at such far off places as Karachi, Benares, Nerur, Manamadurai and Omkar. Nerur alone conducts the *ārādhana* annually and it is doubtful whether the Government of Pakistan having jurisdiction over Karachi now would allow *ārādhana* there!. The reference to the other places causes confusion. The location of the place Sattanur, the birth place of Pundarika Vittala, among more than one place of that name is in doubt. Confusion abounds in respect of many such incidentals. There is a doubt on the ancestral place of the family of Syama Sastri too whether they belonged to Andhra Pradesh originally or to Tamil Nadu. Such points could not be cleared easily.

Admirers, disciples and *harikatha kālakṣēpa* artistes were prone to spin out legends in their ambitious but honest anxiety to laud the eminence of their idols. Legends are galore in the case of Tansen, Tyagaraja, Purandaradasa, etc. Confusion arises in identifying and sifting facts. Vide the *Fragrant Garland*. Tansen, for instance, is widely referred to as the **disciple** of the celebrated Swami Haridas, which is discounted.

Confusion on Authorship : For instance, *Saṅgita Sudha* attributed to Rajah Reghunatha Naik is claimed to have been really authored by his minister, the eminent Govinda Dikşita of vast erudition and father of Venkatamakhin who formulated the *Mēḷakarta* Scheme. Identity of ancient authors like Narada, Markandeya, etc. are positively open to doubts. There were four or even six Avvaiyars in different centuries in Tamil Nadu contributing to and enriching tamil which is the envy of generations. Some, in their passion to extol her merit, aver that it was one Avvaiyar only and that she lived for a thousand years as she had taken the celestial fruit, Indian gooseberry offered by king Adhiyaman!. [*Vide* pages 150-151 of the *Fragrant Garland.*]

In connection with the nomenclature, Carnatic music vs. South Indian music, Prof. P. Sambamurti quoted a verse from *Saṅgita Sudhākara - Tadapi...**Karnatakam daksinesyat hindustani tathottare.*** B.V.K. Sastry points out that it was wrongly invoked by the learned Professor thinking that it was from the work of Haripala of the 14-15th century, while it was only from a very recent work of identical name authored by Hyderabad

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Kasinath Appa Tulsi and released in 1911! [Surely elephants do slip!] *Sruti* [174] magazine on music and dance lists out numerous songs having been attributed to wrong composers in media by eminent critics. It makes interesting reading.

Mysore Vasudevacharya, one of the most eminent *vāggēyakāras*, says :

'I was singing the *kriti* "*Gānasudhārasa*" [*Kharaharapriya*]. The eminent maestros of the Mysore Durbar, Veena Seshanna and Bidaram Krishnappa, after listening to my spacious melody, were in a quandary as to the identity of the composer as the names of "Tyagaraja" and "Vasudeva", both occur in the text. Unable to contain their curiosity, they asked me. When I timidly said that it was my composition, they blessed me with tearful eyes and urged me to continue the good work.' - [*Murali Vani* of B.V.K. Sastry]

Confusion owing to similarity of words : Kalakshetra, Chennai was presenting on August 25, 1995 the ballet ***Sivagitimala*** of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal, 62nd [Pontiff] Peethatipathi of Kanchi Math [1729-1789]. The Chief Guest, formerly a highly-placed judicial dignitary of the apex court, confused the name of the author of the work with that of the Paramacharya who attained immortality only in 1994 and went on eulogizing his work and eminence. Who dared interrupt the august Chief Guest?

Likewise, the Chief Guest inaugurating Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar Trust annual festival, 1999 said that the maestro made his debut at the temple at Tirunageswaram and that the chief *sthala* deity, Raghu there had blest him with all success. The fact was that the great vocalist, whose name deserves to be included in the *Guinness Book of Records* for continuously giving concerts from 1926 to 2000, and perhaps still in specific cases, made his debut at Sri Nageswara Temple, Kumbakonam and Lord Raghu had no role to play there.

At a seminar in March 1998 at Mumbhai, **Veena E. Gayatri** said, 'If the veena string is plucked once, the *nāda* wave emanating therefrom travels back and forth for seven minutes. She affirmed it when specifically questioned again. Justice Sri Krishna restored some semblance of truth to the statement stating that the word *nimisha* actually means in sanskrit the time taken for the twinkle of the eye and the confusion had arisen due to mistaken connotation!' There is also a view that the time taken to pierce a sheaf of lotus leaves with a needle is a *nimisha*.

Chronology is the weakest link in the annals of Bharat. Right from Bharata, many eminent composers are not correctly placed. Sri Andal and the Grand Dame of Tamils, Avvaiyar are placed variously from before the common era right down to the 12th century

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

as explained in *Yet Another Garland* [pages 92-97 'Did Vyasa, Vasistha or Valmiki make any personal jottings, leave behind any private jottings or maintain a diary?', queried Rajaji, statesman, patriot, and scholar. Timelessness has indeed been a calculated and recommended virtue.

Confusion in identifying deity [*murti*] or *kṣetra* cited in particular songs by the composer may not suggest itself to the commentator to decipher. Thus when Tyagaraja says that he 'saw the Lord invariably on the mountain', which mountain he refers to is not known as it could be Tirupati or some hillock on his way to Kanchipuram or just a poetic creation or a mere myth since the Thanjavur belt harbours the grievance that it is bereft of even an apology of a hillock and the bard was no *kṣetrajña.*

Confusion in Fusion Music! Prof. R. Visweswaran, a distinguished authority, highlights with regret the confusion. Says he, 'No consideration is given to the complexity of Carnatic music and **cruelty is inflicted on it by compelling it to dance to the tune set by a total stranger.** It is the attempt to "fuse" Carnatic music with Western pop or jazz music which is nothing but performing bharatanatyam to the music of Michael Jackson! Not content with such gimmickry, our music is pulled by the nose to gulp in an experiment of torture!' [It maybe like bringing out a human being out of the womb of a pig, on which experiments are being done, it was stated!]

Promiscuous confusion [*kicchadi* type] : Here are just a few taken out of the scores listed out in the magazine on music and dance, ***Sruti*** under captions 'Cobbledgook' and 'Gaffes'. The original in the magazine is worth a perusal by all.

a. '*Dēva dēva* [*Māyâmālavagowla*] had a soothing touch especially as the *niraval* on the line *ganamuna* was so aesthetic.'
[By reviewer]

'Was it *Dēva dēva* or *Merusamāna*? There is no g*anamuna* in the former; even in the latter, it is *kalamuna.*'
[Review of review by *Sruti*]

b. '...played Tyagaraja's *Mariverati – Latangi*' [By reviewer]

'The *Latangi kriti* is *Mariverey dikkevru*', a composition of Patnam Subramania Ayyar.' [Review of it by *Sruti*]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

c. 'Sivan's *Sri Valḷi Dēvasēnāpatē* in *Bhairavi* was rendered'
[By reviewer]

'There is a difference between *Natabhairavi* and *Bhairavi*!
[Review of it by *Sruti*]

d. 'Subramania Bharati's song *Tiruvaḍi Śaranam* popularized by Papanasam Sivan..'
[A review]

'The song is of Gopalakrishna Bharati which became popular thanks to a Musiri recording of it.'
[Review of it by *Sruti*]

Confusion mothered by rumours :

A very interesting point raised by one of the most qualified authorities on Classical Carnatic Music as early as December 5, 1923 calls for notice. The writer was C.R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, hailed as a *Keerthanāchārya* and he wrote in the *Hindu* thus :

'There are current among us many *kīrtans* that are credited to Patnam Subramanya Ayyar [of fame and merit and who is hailed as 'Little Tyagaraja'], who had the *mudra* [signature] of Venkatesa. He was a telugu scholar and a facile composer. I have heard strange rumours go among musicians that many of the compositions that go under his name are **not** his! His teacher was the famous Manambuchavadi Venkatasubba Ayyar, relative and disciple of Sri Tyagaraja, who had left behind him many a musical framework [*varṇa mettu*] to which no wording had been attached. That was, they say, one of the methods of composition. He used to note down inspired melodies and thoughts that occurred to him from above to be completed later on. Venkatesa Ayyar who best understood and interpreted him supplied the lyric to some of them after his master passed off. *Parabṛhmamu* and *Avarakaga* are pointed out as instances. He had composed several *kirtans* entirely original in music and lyric among which I may mention the thrice-famous *Swamikisari* [*Dēvagāndhāri*] in praise of his master, Sri Tyagaraja. This embodied in axiomatic shape the wording of many a *kirtana* of Tyagabrhmam and will, in the hands of an able preacher, form the most instructive sermon.

'The doubtful authorship of all the pieces that bear the seal of "Venkatesa" gain strength by the fact that it is more natural to adopt it by one whose name happens to be Venkatasubbayya. But even such a layman as myself can very easily mark off what were composed by Patnam Subramanya Ayyar, for, I had seen him at work, knew his methods and even discussed with him many a knotty point connected with them.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'It was strange, passing strange, that he was never partial to his own production and always preferred to sing the immortal pieces of Tyagaraja in his own powerful expressive and inimitable style.'

Thus Ayyangar had given vent to what was current as rumours and doubts but has left the issue to posterity to do the probe and decide. Patnam Subramanya Ayyar was one of the Pancharatnas [five great disciples of Manambuchavadi], a genius and a tall composer *par excellence.* Mysore Vasudevacharya and others were his disciples and none had whispered anything in this direction. Ayyar was too big an accredited musician to stoop to erroneous conduct. There were jealousies and the like then, it was known. *Mudras* had caused confusion in many cases such as the cases of Irayiamman Tampi and Swati Tirunal. It had been an unwritten code that reticent musicians avoided singing their own compositions. The *mudra* 'Venkatesa' surely could be to honour his own preceptor and such adoption of *guru*'s name as *mudra* has been resorted by composers in other cases too. The *sişya parampara* was too strong and intellectual to allow Ayyar to lay hands on the compositions or outlines of the Bard or even of Manambuchavadi maestro. Hence unless proper evidence come to the fore, this rumour-based confusion is fit to be ignored.! It is unfair!

Confusion on the message of *sāhitya*: A specimen from the memorable *Śilappadikāram,* the masterpiece of Ilango and a great tamil epic of the second or sixth century C.E. Kovalan, the hero and Madhavi, his sweetheart and a danseuse, arrive innocently to spend a pleasant eve on the seashore at Poompuhar on the occasion of the Festival of Indira. They play the famous yaḷ [harp]. When Kovalan plays in exhilaration excited by the occasion, environment and company spiritedly, Madhavi misunderstands his intent as if he is unfaithful to her and in retort sings with intention to convey a similar message which is misunderstood by him. They part, yes, in tragic fashion never more to meet each other! Kovalan loses his head ultimately in a treacherous, vile fraud. All for wrong, mistaken, imaginary, fateful misunderstanding of the *sāhitya* and the *bhāva* conveyed therein and the imaginary emphasis laid on the intention of each other as made out in their songs! A tragedy, notwithstanding mutual chaste love of both! Eminent S. Rajam, musician-artiste, brings out the scene in a picture which finds place elsewhere herein. This is a specimen of confusion with tragic results!

Confusion compounds and often confounds : A drama : After a dreary winter, the musician sees warm sunshine floodlit his hereditary musical home when he is handed over an invitation to present a concert at Delhi! The entire house bursts into delirious joy understandably and the artiste is set to leave by night mail. By an act of gracious Providence, his son arrives and joins the exhilaration. Suddenly he shouts as if a scorpion has stung him, 'Dad, did you look into the invitation carefully? This is the invitation received years back

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and you gave that concert.' Sudden acute constriction, unmusical disappointment shock the innocents and so it goes. This **one act play** was enacted by senior students of the Girls High School, Rameswaram [this author being the Correspondent] with skill and sagacity. Brahmananda Reddi, who was then the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh [prior to his becoming the Union Home Minister] and others enjoyed the play so much that, in fact, they delayed their departure till the play was over. In this case, **confusion was born of delusion**. The preceding drought has driven the entire house, in their anxiety to see signs of better times, to assume that the *tapāl* [letter], that might have fallen from an old book or diary, was only for a fresh assignment! The year printed therein was unseen! A hullabaloo with its seed in confusion!

One is apt to get confused and miss the direction. Let this end with a joke, a musical joke, from the typical Tanjorean musical cavalier, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar recounted by B.V.K. Sastri :

'I recall the boasting of a lady member from the neo-rich class who spared neither time nor money to make her daughter culturally advanced. "The same man", said she," who teaches **my daughter** also instructs the **girl next door**. He said, he would commence *Saveri* to **both**. I insisted that he should not teach any **ordinary variety** of *Saveri* **to my daughter** but only the best and pure *Suddha Sāveri*!."

The lady was obviously ignorant of the fact that *Saveri* [close to *Jogiya* of Hindustani music] and *Suddha Sāveri* [close to Durga] are poles apart!'

Sure, the cavalier maestro would have nodded with profound grace and inward glee and assured the great lady to teach only that [very perfect] ***Suddha Sāveri*** she fondly desired to **her** daughter and the ordinary variety of *Sāvery* to the girl of the adjacent house, chuckling within himself!

Ānandāmṛtakarṣini (*Amṛtavarṣini*) : 'Oh Devi Amṛtēswari! I pray for rains (to relieve the misery of people in this drought-stricken area).' Muthuswami Dikṣitar's song brought in copious rains on his way to Ettayapuram.

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter IX

Guru, Guru, Guru, namo namah!

[Select thoughts]

Om! Sa ha nāvavatu! Sa ha nau bhunaktu!
Saha vīryam karavāvahai!
Tejasvi nāvadhītam astu mā vidvisavahai!
Ōm Śantis śantis śantiḥ!

[May the Lord protect me by giving knowledge, and my *guru* !
May He protect us by allowing us the fruits of such knowledge!
May we both put forth needed efforts in noble endeavours.
May our learning be effulgent and productive!
Let us not hate each other!
May there be peace, peace, peace!] [*Kaṭhōpaniṣad*]

Hindu religion carries multitudes of prayers and stories on the *inter se* relationship between preceptor and his student – all to secure the coveted benefits of the highest knowledge, the supreme wisdom. The ancient *gurukula* system of India advocated ōne *guru*, one style and loyalty to that one *guru.* This system of training imparted a high sense of musical discipline to the student and the music that he produced bore the hall-mark of that discipline in every phase or syllable of it. Purity and grace went hand in hand. But in modern institutional system, there is a given syllabus, a fixed time-table and a fixed time within which the student is asked to learn.'

– R.K.Srikantan, a Sangita Kalanidhi

Scores of exemplary cases of *guru bhakti* find place in our epics. An inquisitive disciple had some doubts and the dialogue between the *sisya* and his *guru* follows :

Disciple : 'Sir, constantly you refer to your *guru's vidwat*, style, vast repertoire, teaching acumen, etc. Your *guru-bhakti* is seen all pervasive and overwhelms me, Sir!'

Guru : 'Child, it is so and it is the accepted norm in Indian traditions. In our days, we paid little tuition fee. We feel beholden absolutely to our *gurus* for blessing us with knowledge and in several cases even our sustenance. Secondly if there is error in *sāhitya* or *saṅgita,* audience ignores our mistakes as a defect in our *pāṭhāntara* [tradition]. We invest ourselves with a better image among audience for building up our *guru-bhakti.* Further, there may

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

be a lurking selfish reason too. Since you are accustomed to hear me praise my *guru* frequently, you too in turn may get into that habit! Will you not?'

[Disciple nods hesitantly!]

'Thus a hierarchical virtue is imbibed deservedly. Genuine *guru bhakti,* one sees even now and in numerous cases too. For instance, maestro Sangita Kalanidhi T. N. Krishnan continued to provide accompaniment only to his preceptor, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar. Tiruvenkadu Jayaraman goes delirious in praising his preceptor stating that he (Jayaraman) was but an empty syringe and that all the medicine came from his stalwart *guru!* Musicians who passed out of Annamalai University College of Music and the College of Carnatic Music, Chennai in the earlier phases can be seen giving expression to copious praise of their *gurus* and rightly so.'

'But one thing, you should remember. As a sanskrit *slōka* clarifies, the *guru* trains his *siṣya* just to cross the river and reach the other bank and it is left to the genius of the *siṣya* to develop his art and capability himself and prosper. If this has not been so, our great luminaries would have all been just flame in pots! In every sphere of knowledge, the disciple while revering his preceptor, endeavours to gain, garner and legate fresh knowledge to the world to keep it on the path of continuous progress and development.'

'*Guruji*, you mentioned that the disciple after crossing over the river is left to himself. Suppose he finds the other side of the river is just the same as the other, what is he to do?'

'It would only suggest that the boy may have no future in the field. Better to quit, rather than stagnate like a frog in the well.'

'*Guruji,* who is a *rasika*?'

'God is described as the Perfect *Rasika* who enjoys good music, good dance and all that is good and gracious. *Bhagawad Gīta* clarifies it. Among mortals, he who equips himself with a good knowledge of linguistics and prosody to appreciate *sāhitya* [lyric] and of the *lakṣanas* of music, has a profound knowledge with a keen sense of appreciation of *bhāva* and *rāsa*, is aware of the traditional and contemporary trends and appreciates good music with involvement and without prejudice wherever it comes from is a good [*uthama*] *rasika.* One not so well equipped, but has some knowledge of essentials and a keen ear to appreciate good music wherever it comes from is a *madhyama rasika.* Just as one differentiates cold from heat, sweet from savoury, he could recognize when the music is below par or suffers from *apaswara*, etc. as his keen policing ears would alert

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

him. One who appreciates only a particular type of music and only when it comes from persons of his choice and satisfies his prejudices and inclinations is *adhama rasika*.'

'Another beauty is that at a given moment the mind **selects** the area or segment for penetrating appreciation in a trice and concentrates on either the *sāhitya* [lyric] or the *saṅgita* [music], the *rāga* or the *tāla*. At a given moment, it is **not** capable of enjoying *sāhitya, saṅgita*, etc., all at once and all together unless he is a *yōgi* or is a connoisseur above par.'

❀❀❀❀

'**Buddha,** the grandiloquent of gracious preceptors and the Pride of India, had, in his profound wisdom, instructed :

'Let not two of you go the same way.
'Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning
glorious in the middle and
glorious in the end – both in spirit and letter.'

How relevant is this to learning music, dance, languages, etc. is quite apparent. But for such sound guidelines, we would be bereft of *gharanas, bānis* [styles], diverse *bhāvas, rasas* and the like. *Manōdharma* flourishes. A thousand flowers bloom. Art prospers.

'Proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life.' [Perhaps in the context of this advice of Buddha, disciples may shape their lives as they wish.]

❀❀❀❀

Three categories of disciples: A classic categorization :

"Annam āvē maṇṇōdu kiḷiyē
Illik kuḍamoḍerumai neyyari
Annār talaiyiḍai kaḍai mānākkar" –*Nannūl* of *Bhavanandi* [13th century C.E.]

The **first** category resembles the celestial bird swan [*annam*] that segregates milk from water and the cow that eats grass but yields milk, both of which are held in high esteem by hindus. The finest tribe of disciples who blossom into trail-blazers, wizards, maestros, etc. illumine this grade.

The **second** category comprises the agriculturist who toils hard to bring out a crop and the parrot which could repeat just what is taught. This comprises the *status quo* [*sans*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

inspiration and intuition] students.

The **third** category is like water poured into a leaky pot. The disciple hears by one ear allowing safe passage through the other to escape retaining nothing – a case of ignoramus! It is like scripture written on water.

Perhaps these categories could be called the *uthama, madhyama* and *adhama sisyas*.

Another Classification : monkey or cat?

Ramakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa compares a baby monkey with a kitten while dealing with spiritual aspirants. Says he :

> 'The young one of the monkey strongly clasps its mother while the kitten cannot do so but mews piteously staying wherever it is placed. The young monkey depends upon its own strength to hold on to its mother but the kitten runs no such risk as it is the mother that carries it wherever it goes. Similarly the aspirant who follows the path of knowledge or the path of selfless work depends upon his own efforts. The other category following the path of love knows that the Lord is the dispenser of everything and surrenders himself to His mercy.'
>
> –*Kalyāna Kalpataru* 44/6

Well, applying this criteria to aspirants in the discipline of music, the kitten category could be the *status quo* or the xerox type who looks to the *guru* for inspiration and sticks on to what he legates. Originality and intuition are well nigh absent or dormant. The musical aspirant should be the baby monkey passionately clasping to what the *guru* has taught but depending on his own inherent strength for progress. **So, better to be a monkey than a cat!**

Yet another – The Lalgudi Classification :

Four categories of students can be identified, viz.,

> those aspiring to become professional performers,
> those aspiring to become teachers,
> those who would prefer to be musicologists and
> those who would prefer to be enlightened *rasikas*.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

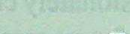
'An artiste is not born; he is ordained', says violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. 'The genes, the day to day ambience, a caring sincere *gur*u and untiring ceaseless practice play significant roles in the making of a true artiste.'

Guru not a merchandise: Gift and Fury :

Bharat took pride until recently in the concept that a *guru* was above market economy. It was a commitment, conviction and an unalterable norm. *Manusmṛti* said so. Allauddin Khan was with Uday Shankar in United States and Ravi Shankar was his under-study then. One day Ravi Shankar purchased a pipe and pouch for tobacco besides a lighter and presented them to his preceptor thinking that he would be pleased. Khan flared up and roared:

> 'Have you come to do *mukhāgni* with these?
> I am not one of those *gurus* you can buy!'
>
> [*Mukhāgni* is the first fire ball placed by a son in the mouth of the dead father laid on the funeral pyre as per hindu custom]

Khan used to tease Shankar on his tendency to live in glitter and luxury warning him that he would never master the art if he were to continue to be lured by such trifles in life. Khan wondered often whether his ward would be able to wean himself away from the glamour and glitter of the West to study sitar with him at rustic Maihar. Ravi too deeply felt the marked change, the vast disparity in style and comforts at Maihar but ultimately reconciled himself to the inevitable. No wonder he reached the highest pinnacle of glory and won its reward! Shankar is now a Bharat Ratna!



M.D. Ramanathan, S.V. Parthasarati, Raman-Lakshmanan Brothers and many others, at the very whisper of the word 'Tiger', do not shudder but turn into eloquent, musical lambs. Their respect even after decades has not withered as Tiger Varadachariar, their *guru*, was a tiger only in name but a genial cow, a sacred, noble, wise, musical Kamadhenu that extended copious pots of musical milk rich in *bhāva-rāga* with the heart of a sane mother and the mind of an erudite fatherly *guru*. To those select band of disciples, even the carnivorous feline quadruped in a zoo would recall memories of only their angelic master.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

K.S. Krishnamurti, vocalist and eminent *guru*, passed out of the College of Music, Annamalai University, Chidambaram in 1943 or so. Sattur Krishna Ayyangar, who was in the faculty, on retirement settled at Bangalore bed-ridden with paralysis. He requested K.S.K. to go over to help him. 'For three years I looked after him and continued my music training simultaneously', says the good disciple who in his turn became a respected teacher, 'I was to him the son he never had. While he would get angry with me if I erred, **he never slapped me** as he did others who made the slightest mistake. I served him in many ways, washed his clothes, etc...After three years, he said that he could not take classes any more and asked me to go and I returned home.' [*Sruti* 178]

'I sang a Muthiah Bhagavatar *kriti* in *Suddha Dhanyasi*. Tiger Varadachariar, who asked me to sing, informed me, 'I will write a letter to your father: you can join this Music College and I will give you a special scholarship...**At the college,** Tiger, Sattur Krisna Ayyangar and T.K. Rangachari **would wake us up at 4.30 a.m. and make us do *akara sadhakam*...**', said K.S.Krishnamurti. He said further, 'We had to wake up early in the morning to do '*akara sādhakam*' and practise regular assignments. Actually the first was to practise *sruti bhēdam* for all the seventy-two *mēḷakartas*. We had mock conferences too.'

The renowned Prof. T.R. Subramaniam says, 'All my music was learnt at the College of Carnatic Music, Madras. We used to practise long after college hours. Principal Musiri Subramania Ayyar used to take us even to his house in the evenings and give us coaching. When he was in form, he would teach us for about eight hours at a stretch,' [*Madras Musings*, December II/1999]. How teachers took personal interest, woke up students and coached them with solicitude and care is significant. No wonder, the institutions enjoyed *gurukulavāsa* atmosphere and produced stalwarts then! Mysore Vasudevaharya when he was in Kalakshetra, Madras used to enquire students of the lessons taken and give them tuitions on a song or two as and when he called them up outside class hours. Such a practice was in vogue with many then. Shermadevi Subramanya Sastri, one of the veteran vainikas of the earlier decades, has said, 'The celebrated Subbarama Dikshitar was old by the time I met him. But he evinced considerable interest in my training. What he taught in the mornings vocally he would communicate through the veena in the evenings. At least he would devote an hour or two daily. At other times, his son Ambi Dikshitar would take over.' This was the normal practice with most of the pairs *of guru-sisyas*.

Can such *guru sēva* [service to master] happen now? Can *gurus* come and wake up students in the twilight hours and where warranted, slap them too, not out of spite but egged on by affection to see in the boy or girl before him a replica of the eminence the system stands for? [It is beautifully said as a joke that in

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

institutions long back, it was that students who mostly stood in classes but now it is the teachers who stand! Why? Out of sheer fear of assault and the need to be ever on alert and ready to take to heels!]

One comes across glorious tributes to the *gurukula* system of *guru-sişya* relationship. The *guru* passed on all he had in literature, music, medicine, etc., to the disciple and the latter functioned as one of the members of the household taking active part in all activities worthy of his role even as he learnt. This two-way activity is brought out beautifully and succinctly in the **story** given below:

The sinners in hell and the meritorious in *swarga* were given each a full pot of *pāyasa,* [sweet pudding] to consume happily to their heart's content but subject to one condition that they should not bend their hands in the act. Later it was found that the full pot in hell remained untouched. When questioned, they complained that the condition made it impossible to take and consume it and accused that the condition was a deliberate infliction with the venomous intent to punish them. At *swarga,* the pot was found empty and the inmates were conversing happily after a sumptuous meal of the delicacy. When questioned, they said that they took out the pudding and fed each other without difficulty sitting face to face. *Gurukulavāsa* falls in the latter category where each lived for the other, which was the glory of the system! *Guru* got the help of the disciple and the latter his wisdom, each feeding the other. A perfect *quid pro quo* indeed! The Gordian knot was cut most dexterously in the latter while the fellows in hell proved that they were rightly placed where they were!

[Such episodes need be compiled for the benefit of **good disciples** and good *gurus* too. The *Garlands* endeavour to highlight such cases.]

Cassette-*Guru* :

'Should not the price paid for cassettes be taken as *guru-dakşina*', enquires an apprentice who is also a practising Chartered Accountant spending most of his time in the *tara sthāyi* of space [flights]. His line of argument stems from Ekalavya treating the image of *guru* Drona as *guru* when the latter had refused to teach him and it is recorded that he became the best of archers by self-effort and self-education drawing inspiration from that *mānasikha guru.*

> 'Tape recorders are able to produce a whole generation of young singers whose voice and mannerisms they have learnt to mimic. The imprint of this kind of transmission remains to be determined.' – Raghava R. Menon

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Persons who learn from a *guru* are doing well; but the music of those whose ***guru* are cassettes**, is no good', asserts L.K. Pandit of Gwalior gharana.

Every rule has its **exceptions.** Ekalavya learnt practising before the model of his *mānasikha guru,* Drona! There have been many *eka santa grahi*-s, who with just one hearing could repeat *in toto* and *in extenso* whatever they had heard. Pandit Goswami Gokulasatvji Maharaj of Indore, a descendant of the Vallabh Sampradaya, has said,

'It was my misfortune that I could never meet Ustad Amir Khan; but I listened to the recordings of his music over and over again and tried to emulate the spirit behind his music.' He was so successful that when he sang for All India Radio, listeners took it as Khan's and sent protest letters for not announcing the programme! [The Maharaj has a collection of all Khan's recordings including *thumris, ghazals, qawwalis* and *khayals* of about 3500-4000 hours.]

–*Indian Express* - October 23, 1993.

Often times, one hears references to great authorities which the learned speakers might not have had the occasion to read or digest. What the immortal divine Child of Kapilavastu said on this has relevance to that point.:

'They are like a man in love who cannot say who the lady is, or like one who builds a staircase without knowing where the place is to be or likely to be, or like one wishing to cross the river calling the other side to come to him!'

Brigadier Dr. B. Ramamurti, eminent neuro surgeon, says that **faith** in *guru* is *sine quo non* for success:

'It is said in sanskrit that the impact of the intensity of faith one has in his doctor, *guru* and parents will be reflected in learning faster or in making the disease disappear faster.'

Guru-Sisya-Guru! – Cyclical roles : *Quid pro quo!*

[We have read that Lord Parameswara received *upadēsa* [enlightenment] from his son, Lord Muruga. Now a current event.]

Dr. Prem Lata Sharma, eminent musicologist, was an examiner for the Ph.D. dissertation of Dr. Sita formerly Head of the Department of Music, Madras University. In a queer change of events, one of the experts in the committee to select Dr Sharma as professor was Sita!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Guru [Preceptor, Preceptress]

Perhaps no other institution in India has come up for such unimaginable glorification over two millennia and over as that of the preceptor. This is admittedly attributable to reverence paid to knowledge, wisdom, seers and sages and to the age-old *gurukula* system of education which had persisted from the days of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* till the second quarter of the 20th century. The well-tuned *guru-sisya* relationship, *gurus* being men of wisdom and reservoirs of knowledge ever ready to open the sluice-gates of their profundity **at no cost** to the student and the uppermost factor of the student being taken in as one of the members of the teacher's household and the *guru* treating the admitted student as own son were golden features of the unexcelled Indian system. The death warrant to the institution had been executed and perhaps justifiably since the institution is unimaginable in present conditions where 'self', 'individuality' and commercialization are uppermost, cordiality and respect are at a discount and ethical morality does not enjoy the accustomed honoured adherence. Most of the students take lessons from a multitude of preceptors and colleges have taken over the function of teaching. A specimen of the respect enjoyed in decades past is reflected in the *Guru Stōtram.* Here are just two *slōkas:*

'Ajñānatimirāndhasya jñānānjana salakaya I
Cakṣurnmilitam yena tasmai Sri Guruve namah. II

[I was blinded by the veil of ignorance. My *guru* opened by eyes with the surgical needle – of words – dipped in the ointment of wisdom. My prostrations to that *guru*!]

Gururbṛhma, gururviṣnuh, gururdēvo mahēsvarah I
Gurureva param bṛhma tasmai Sri Guravē namah. II

[My *guru* personifies Bṛhma, Viṣnu and Lord Siva. He is himself the supreme Bṛhman. My prostrations to that *guru.*]

It is but honest averment that a few teachers now might find it difficult to lay conscious claim to such prostration and that quite a few of students too would now find it equally difficult to make such conscientious prostration!

Guru yet another father

'*Dayaiyāga viddhaiyai ṣaṛṛinōn oru pithā*' is a tamil adage meaning he who solicitously teaches is another father [*jñna pitha*] since he endows the student with wisdom and confers an intellectual birth having taken the student as his son to impart wisdom and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the student entering the home of the *guru* as one of the family folks sharing all the burdens of the family. It was this healthy convention that created the robust atmosphere in Bharat from time immemorial to present successive waves of eminence. This system stands buried, never to be exhumed.

Shankar Pandit performed the final rites of his guru, Nissar Hussain Khan who loved him as his son, become a vegetarian, worn *madivastra* [pure washed clothes], chanted *slōkas* and lived with Shankar himself – as father and son while retaining his individual religious identity personally.

Ustad Allauddin Khan assumed a hindu name to study under Nanu Gopal, a dhrupad-dhamar expert to get facilities as a disciple with the knowledge of his *guru* himself. When the *guru* died, the Ustad averred, 'My ambition to become a singer died with my beloved *guru*'s death' and took to sarod!

'Personally, I believe that any art learnt under a *guru* is the best. A musician without a *guru* is like a horse without bridle', said Vainika Devakottai Narayana Ayyangar [1905-1987].

'Of all the learning experiences, I cherish those when the *gurus* were intense, humorous, enlightened and more than eager to teach. This is a two-way process in which the teacher and the taught participate equally, each contributing to the shaping of the dance form*, [which applies equally to all arts],each infusing his enthusiasm into the inquiry, the search, the yearning to glimpse the higher peaks of Beauty. No pampering of ego here, no hesitation in climbing the steep paths, no holding back of tears, of perspiration, exhaustion, triumph or sheer joy.'

–Sonal Mansingh

[There is a lighter side to this *guru bhakti* in an anecdote relating to a *kṣetra* called Tiruppukkuzhi near Kanchipuram. The *guru bhakti* conscious Vaishnava disciple decided to finish him off by throwing him into a pit and covering it! [In effect, he wanted to end his life by giving what would otherwise be called *jīva samādhi* had the *guru* himself decided upon that kind of *yōga*.] Even at that atrocious minute, *guru bhakti* did not desert him. With feigned, unsullied [?] and profound respect, in words couched with grace and humility, he placed before his venerable *guru,* with folded hands and bent body, whether he [*guru*] would condescend to enter the pit himself or whether the most humble disciple [*dāsānudāsan*] should prayerfully help him to descend down the pit!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter X

Carnatic Music : Etymology
The name came just by sequential need!

Etymology is an interesting field for cerebral exercise and exultation. The term Carnatic music is one such perennial phrase offering copious food for researchers and experts. It is said in the journal *Sarigamapadani* that the word '*Karnatake*' is formed out of sanskrit words *karṇa* and *stati* meaning that it is what continues to ring pleasantly in ears.

The term has been sought by some to be associated with Karnataka area as if the art and science of Carnatic music had originated and flowered there based on the affinity of the word 'Karnataka'. It is however bereft of merit. This geographical connotation is not relevant here, and more so, pertaining to an ancient art which is as popular and perhaps more in other parts of South India as in Karnataka.

In the highly lauded ancient tamil work, *Śilappadikāram* of Ilango, in the *Vanji Kāndam* [lines 155-156], a highly relevant passage referring to regions occurs mentioning 'Konkanar, Kalingar, kodung **Karunādar**, Bangalar...' Could not this **Karunādar** indicate a vast region west of Konkan now in West Karnataka and south of Kalinga [Orissa]? The east and south are bounded by sea. This should place it broadly in the present Tamil Nadu, Kerala and parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh!

Eminent musicologist B.V.K.Sastry has presented a brilliant article on this titled '*Music – Karnataka or South Indian*?' in which after a detailed discussion, he concludes in earnest:

In the absence of any written authority, Prof. P. Sambamurti came across a quotation from a work titled *Saṅgita Sudhākara* that suited the need to clear the doubts

> "*Tadāpi dvividham jñeyam Dakṣinōttara bethataha*
> *Karṇāṭakam dakṣinesyat Hindustani tathottare.*"

'The learned Professor has **committed a mistake** in this. The above verse was not from the famous work of Haripala of 14-15th century as presumed but from another work of identical name of Kasinath Appa Tulsi of Hyderabad published in 1911. This initial error

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

is repeated still by many though it had been pointed out.'

'We should remember that the nomenclatures of hindustani and karnataka arise mostly from **popular usage**. They are not referred to as such in any of the ancient works on music. The only main divisions referred to are *mārga* and *dēśi*.'

'People continue to use the nomenclature Karnataka during the post-Independence period. Notwithstanding any change in the nomenclature **the spirit and form remain unchanged as before** except satisfying the ego of some proponents. It is advisable that musicians direct their energies towards qualitative improvement of music instead of engaging themselves in polemics.'

'Rose smells the same by whichever name it is called ; so enjoy its fragrance before it dries up and stop breaking your head on superficiality', is the message of the wise one. One has to accept that advice but after taking a plain, simple view.

The normal, simple assumption is that the phrase should have come into vogue in the last one or two centuries **to distinguish** the 'music' that had all along been in vogue in the South from the hindustani system which was making powerful inroads from the North. Till then, music in the South should have meant only the Indian music, the present Carnatic music. There was no need for a name till then. So long as Robinson Crusoe was the sole occupant of Juan Fernandez Island, where was any need to assign a name to him and prepare a voters' list? Again, to quote with apologies a familiar but old rustic proverb, *nādarinja pāppānukku pūnal edarkku*? [Where is need for a sacred thread, the insignia of caste, when the country knows him full well as a brahmin?] Since only one system was in vogue earlier, it had not carried a label or distinct name. This could be the reason for the absence of any reference in earlier texts to the two systems. With the aggressive advent of, and competition from the hindustani music system, the need for a distinct name to denote the prevailing, existing system arose. There is the ancient Tirumular idiom, 'Elephant went out of view in the wood and the wood went out of view in the elephant!' [When one looks at a wooden elephant toy, he is apt to think of the type of wood used and forget the elephant form chiselled out of it and *vice versa*.] Even so, when the northern sister took over or was conferred with the name 'Hindustani', people sought for the conjuring music and forgot the older system which got relegated to the South. In such a situation, the southern sister assumed the term *Karnātaka saṅgitam* taking into account its ancient heritage. When Rohinson Crusoe [Junior] arrives in the island, the need to distinguish the one from the other arises!]

Carnatic music is nothing but the continuation of the ancient Indian music as it has

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

come down from the days of Bharata as a legacy and heritage, of course, systematically developed, reinforced and enriched by masters. *Karnātaka*, in normal parlance, means merely, simply, without ornamentation and scholarly overtones, old, ancient, *sampradāya, purādana, prāchīna, pāramparya.* It is normal and usual to find orthodox old style persons being described '*Ivar romba karnātaka pērvaḷi*' [he is a very old-fashioned person]. This colloquial usage is common particularly in Tamil Nadu, etc., where the music had its brightest moorings and had seen dynamic development. The chaste, *raga*-based, *manōdharmic*, Indian system of music that survived in the South and more particularly in Tamil Nadu in a significant measure, as distinct from the hindustani, the confluence of Indian and Persian influences, came to be distinguished as *Karnātaka saṅgitam.*

Chakkani rāja mārgamulundaka, sandula duranēlē, O manasa! ['When a beautiful royal high road is there, why take to lanes, dear mind', queried Sage Tyagaraja.] Again, in legal parlance, the simple rules out the complex. A fair plain connotation dispenses with the contrived. Why dig for the unusual or angle for and import far-fetched meanings which do not stand to reason? Earlier it was only one system. There was a division in the *rāga* family, in the *räga* field. The more powerful, that which was nearer the seat of power with *bhāṣāṅga* or *dēśi* influences, had been in the usual course christened hindustani, which simply indicated Indian music to Indians and foreigners. The original, uncorrupted, old Indian music that survived in the South being far away from invasions of such influences found itself without a name! [Recall the story of Lava being absent, Vasishta created a fresh Lava and called it Lavakusa lest Sita should find fault with him!] Here such creation was not necessary. The ancient system, finding itself deprived of the term 'Indian' or 'hindustani' which had been arrogated by the Persianised system, was just in dire need of *nāmakaraṇa* and had come to be called *Karnātaka saṅgitam,* in proud assertion that it is the genuine, old, ancient, pure and native music.

There is a peculiar, rather sad, irony in this. The word Karnatic strangely carries within its fold the word, Karna, the *de facto* **eldest** of Pandava princes. He was deprived of his ancestral title by a quirk of fate and was in need of recognition and a title. The Kauravas presented him with them. This is the accepted version. Even so, the ancient system, deprived of its name, took on the only and the most plausible name which would at once retain its prime claim to the legacy and also save its self-respect, viz., 'ancient music' - *Karnātaka saṅgitam*! Carnatic is but the anglicized usage like Carnatic Wars, Bengal, Coramandel Coast, Tuticorin, Tanjore, *dharmic*, etc. Carnatic [or Karnatik] music just connotes the ancient, uninhibited Bharatiya music as it has come down to us with absolute valid historicity and legal parentage.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

There is another point of irony in this. Hindu India was, in pre-historic times, stretched as far as Cambodia which was then called Kambhojam where the *rāga Kāmbhōji* was very popular once as were *Kēdaram* in Kedara region, *Sourāshtram* in Sourashtra, etc. So have said Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi and others. How India has shrunk in size and has continued to do so even in the twentieth century is known. Even so, the old Indian music became Carnatic music confined to the far south! It is now vibrant in Metropolitan Cities, occasionally heard in other urban centres and is well nigh silent and being slowly forgotten in rural areas where it ruled and reigned once! No more one could hear of Tillaisthanams, Umayalpurams, Wallajahpets or Maharajapurams and Lalgudis after a quarter or half a century hence!

Origin & Purity of Music & Dance – Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra speaks

'The origin of music in the West is in the consciousness of the composer. But in India, the origin is from the *Vēdas*. We are therefore able to give a cosmic conception to our art. However the vast majority of Indians have yet to penetrate into the cosmic consciousness. Shiva is the Cosmic Dancer. Even if the dance is not as good as it should be, Indians appreciate it because they think of the cosmic idea behind transcending the physical form. I can say that the dancer who does it must have a tremendous feeling.

When art is truly practised we do not think about the audience nor do we care whether the audience is there or not. We sing for ourselves; we respond to our inspiration. A true creative artist does not create for appreciation. Most institutions do not have pure art as they think too much of the box office. I do not compromise.'

The real soul of India is felt when there is the spirit of reverence, of compassion, of the spirit of beauty. It is impossible to think of India without this sense of beauty. There is no religion without beauty. No great person or *avatara* is described without being enveloped in the consciousness of beauty. There is no doubt that art belongs to the soul, to the intuition – it belongs to *Buddhi.*'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter XI

Devotion is the Soul of Indian Music Gandhiji demonstrates! - Tyagaraja vindicated!!

Classical Indian music has all along been fundamentally and primarily spiritual in content and application, form and spirit. It is an accepted fact that but for this ideal wedding of the art with spiritual enlightenment it might not have enjoyed consistent and constant patronage as well as undiminished virility and vitality from the dawn of the art. It may be interesting to note that when a resolution was brought before a University in the South to delete all devotional pieces and devotional music in tamil from the curriculam and to retain only secular [?] music, it was opposed on the plea that such a measure would rob the institution of the bulk of the verses, songs and literature and starve the faculty of the essence and soul of *saṅgita* and *sāhitya* [music and lyrics] since devotional and spiritual music constitute the health and wealth of the science and art, their *bhāvas* and *rasas*. Fortunately the resolution was vetoed by a solitary vote The unparalleled treasures of tamil literature, prose and poetry, music and culture were saved by the solitary vote.

Had it been passed, it would have been difficult to stem the tide of the diastrous virus spreading since tamil enjoys precious, ageless treasures which cannot be sacrificed. If Indian music, sculpture, architecture and other arts have excelled and inscribed their majestic rolês and undying contribution proudly in the gorgeous pages of the cultural history of the world, it was almost due to the camaraderie between spiritual endeavours and the arts. And music in particular has enjoyed this union to its best optimum due to the advent of successive waves of musical saints, scholars, bards, etc., in every region of the country who found in music the best means of communication and propagation of their findings on the mysteries of the 'self' and the 'soul'. And music has also been held as most receptive to God. Even where they are in verses, the Indian delights in tuning them and singing it to accord with the genius of the land. Few nations have marshalled and capitalised on the appeal and utility of music as India has. *Nāma saṅkīrtan* and *nāma japa* enticed and enveloped the spiritually inclined national as they transcended the constraints of space, time, acoustics, environment and man and money power. [*Vide* pages 63-75 of *Yet Another Garland* for a thesis on *Nāma Sankīrtan.*] A historic experiment was conducted by the greatest man of the twentieth century in India to the knowledge of the whole world.

Lamenting on the massive destruction and disastrous desolation that wars and strifes had inflicted on humanity, Mahatma Gandhiji, whose prayer meetings were the most significant and elevating features of his life and wondrously unique in massive appeal and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

popularity, had said :

> 'Such is the bankruptcy of military power, I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting that the power exerted by *Rāma Dhuna* sung by millions with proper beat of time [*laya*] is different in kind from what a military tune produces. It is infinitely superior. Mass recital from heart confers lasting peace and happiness [*śāntham, soukhyam* and *maṅgalam*]'.

How his heart was so divinely integrated with his faith in *Rām dhuna* was witnessed during his historic fast in September 1947. He was suffering from severe stresses, influenza and cough but refused medicines. Dr. Dinshaw K. Mehta and Dr. M.D.D. Gilder were apprehensive of his ability to withstand the strenuous impact on his slender health. Gandhiji used to merrily smile and lift his finger upwards indicating that he was in the hands of the Super Healer of the Universe! He averred,

> 'I have a feeling of the presence of God within me this time as I have never before had. If *Rāma Nāma* has fully penetrated my heart, I am sure that I shall not need even water to survive! ***Rāma Nāma* is my penicillin.** I would rather prefer to become a victim in the experiment with the Lord's *nāma* as medicine.
>
> 'Science has much to learn. When *Rāma Nāma* holds full sway, sin is expiated and all illnesses vanish! I assure you, people have no idea of the full potency of *Rāma Nāma.* I must discover the science of the Holy name or I perish in the attempt!'

He clarified that the effect of fasting depends upon the outer and inner purity of the fasting person and the accuracy of his perception. He was successful in the experiment and it was a hectic landmark century of runs indeed. More was to follow. He batted on with boundaries and sixers and the puny singles, etc. were not his staple! Manu Gandhi had broken a bone and surgery was needed.

> 'No, *Rāma Nāma* would suffice!'
> 'Bapuji, can it mend a broken bone?'
> 'Not only *Rāma Nāma* can mend the bone; but it can do much, much more if only one attunes oneself.

And he hit up the bicentury too with gusto with *Rām Nām* brand of painless surgery! It is the conviction that carries one to the goal.

What Gandhiji demonstrated was the significant replica, essence and cream of Sri Tyagaraja's life, thoughts and actions and the sum and substance of his songs, the *Tyāgōpaniṣad.* Tyagaraja revels in his own Reservoir of **Rāma *bhakti*** through *saṅgita* and *sāhitya.* He lived a life of Rama Consciousness a century and a half before. Man

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

assesses his intense and passionate beliefs only from his songs and the writings of his devout disciples. Many of his songs exude the most fragrant, undiluted *bhakti* of the purest which Gandhiji demonstrated to the world in the twentieth century. Who can deny the success or the efficacy of this spiritual cure which the greatest man of this century has demonstrated to the gaze of the entire world? One may perhaps doubt the approach of Tyagaraja and saints of his nature but who can deny the success of the demonstration done in the open and in the twentieth century?

The songs of the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru are too many on this theme to be mentioned here. The earlier *Garlands* too have dealt with many of them. In *Ādaya Sri Raghuvara* [*Ahiri*] *and Yendudāginādō* [*Todi*], Tyagaraja says that the Lord takes over the pain and punishments inflicted on his devotees. In his songs, *bhakti mārga* and *jñāna mārga* are in full focus with similes and metaphors, allusions and anecdotes. One who is conversant with the teachings and messages of his songs and follow them in his life are sure not only to secure a doctorate from the University of Tiruvaiyaru but enjoy both *prēyas* and *srēyas* in this life and beyond! That is the only conclusion wise men have arrived at.

Nādōpāsana was the key to his illustrious life as it has been with similar eminent souls. *Nādalōluḍai Bṛhmananda* [*Kalyāna Vasantam*], *Saṅgita Jñānamu* [*Dhanyāsi*] and many others convey the message and these are frequently sung .A great authority has said :

> 'A critical study of his life and songs shall convince everyone that he is a *Vibhuti Avatar* of God to rehabilitate music in its original purity, to redirect it through proper channels of spiritual communion and also to replenish it with original compositions breathing Divinity.'

"As a true artist and a realized soul he spurned the path of worldly glory. As a musician, he elevated the art into a *sādhana* and an *upāsana*. He is at once a romanticist and a conservative radical. Absolute universality of his mind saturated his songs with the spirit of sweetness, peace and bliss. The power and beauty of his songs should be experienced and enjoyed by every individual for long. It is Nature herself revealing its sound and sense in the person and songs of Tyagaraja. **His voice is the Voice of Eternity**!"

[*Journal of the Music Academy*]

[**Note:** Chapter XIII is an extension of this chapter.]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter XII

Music, Art thou a villain!

[Random Thoughts]

Sāhitya [lyric] and *saṅgita* [melody] together constitute, in essence, music quite apart from percussive and other aspects. The two vital segments could be compared to the Siva – Sakti concept and to the word-meaning concept. Together, they assume the role of *Ardhanārīswara.* To the great composers like the Trinity, the Tamil *Pancharatnas* and to men of musical erudition like the Tiger Trio [Varadachariar, Srinivasa Ayyangar and Krishnamachariar], *sāhitya* and *saṅgita* provided 50:50 content. They were the most perfect musical souls to whom every single detail was *sine quo non* to ensure and secure *pūrṇatvam* [absolute, comprehensive, complete fullness]. To the *abhinaya* artist, there is naturally a tilt in favour of the *sāhitya* as it is the meaning of the lyric and the emotions conveyed therein [*sāhitya bhāva*] that lends the mood, expression and direction and leads to the portrayal and interpretation. *Sans sāhitya* it is not *nāṭya* or *abhinaya.* To the enlightened musician in concert, it could vary from 50 : 50 and tilt on either side according to his genius, approach, occasion, expertise and mood. The great Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, in his unique space flights, somersaults, dives, plunges and thrusts in the region of absolute *manōdharmic* music, was not often averse to swallow, munch and sacrifice the lyric and perhaps *lakṣana* too. Here is the view of connoisseur S.Y. Krishnaswami who enjoyed close friendship with Ayyar.

> 'Being a creative romantic, sometimes he took liberties with the strict grammar of a *rāga.* The pedestrian and the pedagogue have often used this as a weapon against him. Being imbued with a rare sense of the proliferation potential of a melodic pattern, he gave rein to the mood of moment and created unrehearsed effects.' [What he said of *lakṣana* applies to *sāhitya* too.]

To the vast majority of musicians and listeners, it varies radically *sāhitya* being the consistent loser, always on the debit side. This is so whether it is a *kṛiti* or a *kīrtan.* Where it is a *kṛiti* [musically important song], it may be pardonable; but in a *kīrtan* [where the lyric is very important], detriment to lyric is unfair. Apart from the inability to understand the meaning and message of the song, occasionally inaccuracy in lyric.itself leads to mischievous results. It is particularly so since musicians in India [except those providing the music in films] do not have the script before them. This practice has been in vogue and insisted upon from ancient times as music was passed on from generation to generation orally [*karṇa parampara*] and later too to enable the artiste to concentrate on

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

manōdharmic sanchāras, saṅgatis, brikas, etc. and to avoid diversion of attention to the paper kept in front of him. Musicologists have vociferously complained of the 'murder' of lyrics often. [To meet this, a joke was generated to fling at each other meaning that the musicologist cannot sing even as a mechanic knows not driving and the musician does not know grammar even as a driver may know little of mechanism. There is a grain of truth. Did not tennis titan John McEnroe often challenge referees to get down to the lawn and handle the bat? And which referee accepted the challenge? This is so with some critics too. Of course there have been a few exceptions and exceptions do not constitute a rule.]

Sāhitya of songs in India is in different languages and few musicians are linguists. Some may know the language of the song. A few eminent vidwans get the lyric clarified in advance and several gather the abstract of the meaning of songs which they propose to sing so that they do not sacrifice *sāhitya bhāva*. But to the many, *sāhitya* is but cement and brick supplying solidity to the music or a mere coat-stand! *Sāhitya bhāva* is ignored in musical concerts though in bharatanāṭya, this lop-sided approach is avoided as what is in the lyric needs necessarily to be translated overtly through gestures and communicated to audience.

Corrupt pronunciation of *sāhitya* is apt to convey a meaning just the opposite of what the composer has intended. His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal, the Paramacharya had, in this connection, pointed out the mischief wrought by wrong pronunciation or emphasis thus :

'Many musicians who concentrate more on music than on the lyric distort the meaning and message of the song. The correct meaning of the line *Guruguhāyajñāna dhvānta savittre* in the *kriti, Sri Subramaṇyāya namastē* [*Kambhoji*] can be got only by breaking up the line as *Guruguhāya ajñāna dhvānta savittre* which means "obeisance to Guruguha, the Sun who dispels the darkness of ignorance". Some sing this line lengthening the *Guruguhāya* giving the impression that it is a separate word and the rest of the line sound like "*jñana dhvānta savittre*" which distorts the meaning as "The Sun dispelling the darkness of Wisdom"!

'Similarly in *Sankarācāryam* [*Sankarābharanam*], there is a line *Paramādvaita sthāpana līlam,* meaning "He who founded the profound philosophy of *advaita* as an act of play". But some who either do not understand or do not care, elongate the word "*Parama*" and sing the second word to sound as if '*dvaita* is established as an act of play' and thus convert the *Advaita Āchārya* into *Dvaita Āchārya*!' [The wrong emphasis converts the founder of the *Advaita* philosophy into the founder of *Dwaita* philosophy!]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Here is an incident from the absorbing tamil epic *Śilappadikāram.* Hero Kovalan, of a rich merchant family, discards the Queen of Chastity, Kannagi, his wife and spends his time pleasantly with danseuse Madhavi, who, to her credit, is constant in her love of the man. The scene relevant is the magnificent seashore of the port town Poompuhar of Chola country which was very flourishing then as archaeological excavations and tamil lore testify to. The occasion is Indira Festival which is beautifully described by the poet, Ilango. Crowds throng the beach and there is gaiety and revelry all-round. [This is how the learned Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, who salvaged the epic a century back summarises.] Kovalan takes over the harp from Madhavi and sings eloquently playing the instrument all the while. [He is shown to be a *vaiṇika-gāyaka.*] Mostly the lyrical content of his songs hover around love between man-woman. It could be that the occasion, place and company inspired him to dwell on such a theme full of passion. Lo! Seeds of suspicion germinate in the pure mind of the danseuse and sweet heart . 'He has others too, I see and he sings passionately on them!', she thinks. Taking over the harp, she sings and plays the harp giving a positive retort as if she too has her lovers. She has none indeed and Kovalan too has none save the dear Kannagi languishing at home. The wrong emphasis laid on *sāhitya bhāva* sows the seeds of suspicion, generates *inter se* jealousy and separates the fond lovers once for all and it ends in what is described as Shakespearean tragedy. Here the undue innovative emphasis on the emotional content of the lyrics drives the wedge between them. Who was the villain? Is it music or cruel Fate through the instrument of music as expounded in lyric! Lyric too has to be appropriate to the needs of the occasion which should dictate the word, tune, *bhāva-rasa.* Had the two sung the same songs at home instead of on the seashore and on that particular day, both would have congratulated each other and diluted themselves in passionate embrace!

Perhaps a detour for some thoughts on the aspect of *rāga* may be relevant. A top musician of proven ability claimed credit for 'inventing' **a new *rāga.*** Another top musician of equally proven ability claimed that it was not true at all. The august Music academy got seized of this issue and supported the first musician initially and the second musician subsequently. This was a historic phase indeed! Eminent Venkatamakhin has laid the rule that there are seventy-two *janaka* or *mēḷa* [primary] *rāgas* on the whole. The optimum *janya* [derivative] *rāgas* could reach the colossal figure of 34848! Of course there are a score of highly popular, well-known *rāgas,* about a hundred *rāgas* in constant use and thousands known, unknown, rare, stillborn, etc categories. New *rāgas* are claimed to have been 'invented'. Perhaps this particular word is being objected to since there is no invention as such but only structuring, formulating and listing.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Nāda is all-pervasive, eternal and immortal, unborn and original, decayless and growthless. It is ever effulgent. Venkatamakhin has opined that *nāda* could be invoked and framed into any one of the seventy-two *mēlarāgas* giving each a specific shape [*rāga swarupa*], appeal [*bhāva*], feature and content. The same applies to *janya rāgas* which bear the same relationship *vis-a-vis mēḷa rāgas.* A jugfull of water taken from ocean does not affect the ocean nor closing the shutters and doors affect the space. Even so, *nāda* is unaffected when a *rāga* is delineated out of it. Culling out a *janya* does not *ipso facto* affect the *mēḷa rāga* nor the formation of a *mēḷa rāga* affect the *nāda.* The *janya* and the *mēḷa rāgas* form and continue as inseparable parts and parcels of the all-pervasive *nāda.* The *janya* is already there in the micro *mēḷa* as well as the macro *nāda* and the *mēḷa* likewise lies inseparably in the universal *nāda.* It is similar to the *advaitic* philosophy of *jīvātma vis-à-vis* the *Paramātma.*

In *Nādasudhā rasambilanu* [*Arabhi*], Tyagaraja unequivocally clarifies that *Vēdas, Puranas* and *Sastras* have their basis and moorings in *Nāda* only. And *saṅgita* is but a *Upa vēda.* In *Nādalōludai bṛhmānanda mandave; Swaraduphalaprada saptaswara rāga, niśaya sahita* [*Kalyānavasantam*], the bard defines it too. He says 'Take supreme delight [*bṛhmānanda*] by plunging yourself heart and soul in *nāda.* It comprises the *sapta swaras* which invest one with joy and the *rāga* groups. By groups, perhaps he refers either to the twelve *cakras* or to the seventy-two *mēḷa* entities. Thus the *swaras* and the *rāgas* are all part and parcel of *nāda.*

The above statement accepted, none **'invents'** or **'creates'** a *rāga* as it is already there unidentified without *nāmakaraṇa.* In harnessing the waves, one does not invent or create water. Harnessing wind power, one does not invent or create air. Even so in structuring a new *rāga*, one does not invent or create it. He merely brings or chisels out or formulates one providing a musical structure enjoying the particular shape, emotion and appeal as he desires.

Sri Mahā Ganapati Ravatuman (*Goula*) : On Sri Ganapathi of Tiruvarur, the place of Dikşitar's birth. He is the swarnākarshana Vignarāja - he came as goldsmith to appraise the purity of gold got by Saint Sundaramurti Nayanar.

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chapter XIII

Devotional Music & Saintly Souls

'In India, religion was never shackled and no man was ever challenged in the selection of his *Iṣta Dēvata* or his preceptor.
Religion grew as it grew nowhere else.'
– [Swami Vivekananda in September 1894]

What distinguishes the human from the animal is certainly not love, nor the capability to love, nor the purity or intensity of it. The distinction lies in the unique, distinct capability to impregnate it with meaningful substance, embellish, adorn and elevate that love itself into a way of life, the soul and direction of life and invest it with noble aspirations and aims shaping it into a productive divine art resplendent with intellectual and spiritual diversity, content, application, elegance and fragrance. Sri Satya Sai Baba has beautifully summed up them thus :

'Love is reverence when directed towards parents,
companionship when it flows towards friends,
passion when it felt towards partner,
respect when it moves towards elders,
kindness when drawn towards children and
devotion when it is canalized towards God.'

Presently dealing with the last category of love of God, which is pure devotion or *bhakti*, it could be said that India has specialized and excelled in casting this endearing net of divinity wide to cover the whole universe as God is all-pervasive and all-embracing as beautifully brought out in the *slōka* :

'Tvamēva māta ca pitā tvamēva
Tvamēva bandusca sakhā tvamēva I
Tvamēva vidyā dravinam tvamēva
Tvamēva sarvam mama dēva Dēva!' II

[Thou art my mother and my father;
Thou art my relative and my comrade;
Thou art my knowledge and my wealth;
Thou art everything to me, O, my Lord.']

This robust view has been reiterated, amplified and fortified by divines and apostles repeatedly for the benefit of mankind through epics, stories, songs and other means. They

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

derive authority and clarification, affirming that Godliness permeates human lives, nay, all beings, from the Lord's message,

> 'He sees, who sees the Supreme Lord existing equally in all beings,
> the Imperishing within the perishing,...he goes to the Highest Goal.'
> –*Bhagawad Gita* XIII 28/29

Having invested God with Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotence and having set the goal to mankind as attaining godhead, love of God, leading a life of godliness, praying and singing, extolling and dwelling on the virtues of God have been the favourite pastime and chosen pattern of life of saints, seers, *vāggēyakāras, harikathā* artistes and everyone else from the dawn of history and before. This love of God broadly termed *bhakti* has taken many forms such as –

Sannidhi	Constant presence before God including *tirtha yatra,*
Darśana	Direct vision, personal adoration,
Archana	Reciting the sacred names and virtues of God besides offering flowers, food, etc.,
Pāda sēvana	Surrendering oneself at the holy feet of Lord,
Śravana	Listening to exploits and virtues of God, expounded through music or discourses.
Sambāṣana	Conversing with God
Dāsya / Sēvana	Service to God and devotees
Smaraṇa / Dhyāna	Chanting, meditating on the infinite names of God,
Kīrtana, Nāma Saṅkīrtana, bhajan	Singing the holy names, virtues, exploits and blessedness of God.

A study of the lives of saints and apostles reveals that each has adopted one or more of these paths of *bhakti* in their quest for self-realization and God-realization. The different methods have helped the adoring *bhakta,* the house-holder, the worker on the field or the factory, the man on travel and, in short, everyone to concentrate on *bhakti* without hindrance to and deviation from his own duty, *karma* or *dharma. Bhakti* supplements *karma yōga* or *jñāna yōga* and fortifies them. Scriptures have devised such methods to suit the genius, aptitude, attitude, vocation and situation of every man, woman and child. Faith, sincerity, dedication and concentration have been stressed as *sine quo non.* Pure *bhakti* is to be felt, experienced and enjoyed and it exhilarates and bestows enduring boons as outlined in the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava :

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'As fire kindled into a blaze burns faggots to ashes, O, Uddhava, devotion to Me consumes all evil.'

'He who loves Me is rendered pure; his heart melts in joy [which is beautifully described by the Saivite Apostle as *Kādalāhi, kaśindu kaṇṇīr malhi,* etc.]. He rises to Transcendental Consciousness with his elevated emotional nature duly activated.

"Tears of joy swell and surge out of his eyes; hairipillation occurs; heart melts in love. Consequent bliss is so overwhelming that self' is negated.

'Such a devotee is a purifying factor to the whole Universe.'

–Srimad Bhāgavatam XI

Numerous lives of seers and saints enliven the chapters on *bhakti* and *bhāgavatas* and no scripture is tired of presenting earnest advocacy and message on these. Singing a few songs of Tyagaraja or others is enough to familiarize one with the effulgent galaxy of lives of *mahāpuruṣas* like Prhlada, Narada, Parasara, Pundalika, Vyasa, Ambariṣa, Suka, Sanaka, Rukmangada, Arjuna, Markandeya, Vibhisana and others. The elixir of *bhakti* has been brought to the full focus of common people in the sanctified lives of many *bhāgavatōttamās* like Sadasiva Brhmendral and Bodhendra Saraswati Swamigal and the lives of singing minstrels like Mira, Andal, Kabir, Tulasidasa, Purandaradasa, Ramadasa and hundreds of others. Indian history and ancient lore abound with the lives of such gallant, god-intoxicated men and women of grace and grandeur, of selfless surrender and dedication. The galaxy surpasses the depth and grandeur of the Atlantic, the vast space and spread of the Pacific, the fragrance and antiquity of the Indian Ocean and the sweetness of the *sapta swaras*. As well said by Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Ayyar.

'The special preoccupation of Hindu thought and philosophy has been a conscious adjustment of the claims and potentialities of the body and the mind to those of the soul, the recognition of and allowance for worldly activity. Hinduism may well be conceived as a reconciliation of bodily regimen with mental discipline and spiritual evolution, designed to produce an intrinsic and essential harmony within the microcosm of human personality whose objective is to reach and be absorbed in the macrocosm which is *Bṛhman* or the Oversoul.'

Salvation [*mōkṣa*] is the most familiar word or concept in India and is not infrequently heard from people of diverse age groups as if it is easily achievable and is the positive goal towards which humanity has to progress. This spiritual urge is inborn in the Indian whether he actually wishes to march forward to achieve and attain it or not. [The absurdity of the uninitiated human to live on and yet attain salvation has been very beautifully brought out in the classical film *Dāsi Aparanji* wherein she expresses her wish to see Kailas, the Abode

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of Lord Siva, with her flesh and blood intact!] The legacy of pure devotion has been passed on from generation to generation and inherited as a virtue. Even as the baby seeks to embrace the warm bosom of its mother, the calf tries to reach its suckling mother and the tendril tends to reach the nearby plant, *jīvātma* is ever on the look-out to march towards and dilute itself in the *Paramātma*. To achieve this, the different forms of worship as detailed above have been in vogue from the days of the epics and before that too. The total volume of literature originating from the *Vēdas* and the epics is immeasurable and astounding. The wisdom contained therein is insurmountable. Sages and seers of India delighted in the favourite pastime and pursuit of this spiritual goal with undiluted passion, fervour and faith. It has gone on to such an extent that material life, endeavours and pursuits had come to be frowned upon consistently by eminent men including Annamacharya, Purandaradasa, the Trinity and other *vāggēyakāras* of renown.

❀❀❀❀

The fundamental corollary to elucidate, present and advance this spiritual urge and scouting before God and carry the masses too along on the charted route, was the need for a pliable, effective instrument. The effectiveness of the spiritual exercise and the sure attainment of the goal rested on the selection of that specific instrument which would produce the expected results and could also be handled with ease and certainty by the initiated, connoisseur and the lay. Easy accessibility, ready availability and communicative potential of this instrument to the saint and the lay were *sine quo non* for selection. And music has been tested and found to be the most satisfactory tool and handmaid as it attracts, enchants, enthralls and easily appeals to and is listened to by all segments of the society. And more important than that is the fact that it is also reputed to be the most acceptable mode and means, quite welcome to God. In *Bhagawad Gita,* Lord Krsna, the foremost of flautists Himself, proudly indicates His musical inclinations by asserting that He is *Sāma Vēda* among *Vēdas* [*Vēdānām Sāma Vēdōsmi*], the singing minstrel vainika-gayaka Narada among saints, etc:

Lord Siva is hailed as the embodiment of *Nāda* and Cosmic Dancer [*Tāndavam*] and Devi Parvati does the *lasya*. Goddess Saraswati wields the veena and Lakshmi too is fond of playing the veena while Viṣṇu is a percussionist. Nandi Deva is master of *laya*. Heavens is sprinkled with divine musicians and dancers of the highest repute. Every epic in any language is sprinkled with music and dance amongst royalty, intellectuals and the lay. And this abundance and affluence of arts is held out in *Kathōpaniṣad* by Dharmaraja as an offer of gift to Naciketas in lieu of his request for enlightenment and wisdom on life after death. These are mentioned here to indicate the enormous prestige and popularity, attraction and utility, image and renown of music and dance. In the quest for an instrument for devotion, naturally music came to be chosen and settled as the best and what has happened

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

from ancient times has fully vindicated the choice as richly rewarding. Music has been accorded its due by being christened as *Upa Vēda* or *Gandarva Vēda.*

Swami Dayananda Saraswati clarified that refreshing *manōdharmic saṅgitam*

confers solemn tranquility,
bans ego-centric thoughts,
absorbs thought, attention and action of the listener,
hypnotizes and draws out heart and soul diluting them all in *Nāda.*
synchronizes heart-beats with *tāla* and
strikes absolute rapport between *rāga swarūpa* and *sāhitya bhāva* with the *jīvātma* melting into the *Paramātman.*

There is total identity of person, *Nāda* and *Paramātman.* This is pure *nādōpāsana,* transcendental bliss, which is beautifully brought out by Tyagaraja in his *kṛiti Nādalōludai bṛhmānanda mandave* [*Kalyānavasantam*] and many other songs confirming what Sage Yajñavalkya and others have said. He mentions the end-result in the *kṛiti Kaddanuvāriki* [*Tōdi*] thus :

'The compassionate Lord protects those who sing with devotion, casting off sleep, pure in mind, using a drone with correct intonation of *swaras* and adhering to the path of tradition! To ascend the ladder of pure devotion to God and qualify as *jīvanmukhta,* one needs be blest by Lord Bṛhma, the Creator, with *saṅgita jñāna* [knowledge of music.']

The same view has been held by the great Bhartruhari and many others.

Well! **How does the West consider and approach the issue?** Paul Brunton brilliantly echoes sentiments which are as oriental as those of Indian bards and saints. He says :

'Who can respond to the genius of Bach's Saint Mathew Passion unless some awakening of spirituality is in him!'

'Bach's [1685-1750 C.E.] the final chorus from Saint Mathew Passion, Beethoven's [1770-1827] last piano trio [Archduke] and the slow movement from Mozart's [1756-1791] C. Major Viol in Concerts, K 216 – These three are spiritually inspired works.'

Walter Allen avers that he got at the age of fifty the mystic experience of timelessness, saw Divine Light in vision and felt one with god while listening rapt Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. And Brhms himself has said :

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'When I reach my best in the task of composition
I feel a higher power working through me!'

At the age of twelve, Yehudi Menuehin [1916-1999] presented a thrilling performance at Berlin. An enchanted and enthralled Albert Einstein, famous for his Theory of Relativity, followed the young lad backstage, hugged him and whispered the famous, well-known statement, 'Now I know there is God in Heaven!'.

When a violinist complained that a passage of his was unplayable, Ludwig Van Beethoven replied;

'When I composed that, I was conscious of being inspired by God Almighty.
Do you think, I can consider your puny little fiddle when He speaks to Me!'

This is apt to bring to mind the incident concerning Yāḻmuri *paṇ* in the life of Saint Tirujñānasambandar, the Saivite Apostle. When he sang, the accompanist on harp, Saint Tiruneelakanta Yāḻpāna Nayanar was not able to bring it out on the instrument and in utter disgust sought to break it. Sambandhar dissuaded him. Saintly souls go into a trance and are in the hands of God and become absolute *advaitis,* chanting *Aham Bṛhmāsmi*!

The divine wedding or co-parcenary between devotion to God [*bhakti*] and music [*saṅgita*] has been one of the most visionary, far-reaching and enduring acts of Indian seers. The lure of music has lent grace and charm, shape and appeal to the lyrics and it has been found to be easier not only to memorize them all in days of *karṇaparampara* [oral transmission] but to take to and communicate with the masses at large. It could be asserted safely that if Hindu religion, culture, nation and civilization have survived the violent onslaughts and virulent plunders of never-ending, successive invading hordes, it is only due to the unassailable faith in and devotion to God [*bhakti*] and its basic costume and ornament, *saṅgita*. The role of *saṅgita* has indeed been *non pareil* and its contribution massive.

Nāma saṅkīrtan and *bhajan* have been the *tour de force* of devotional endeavours. They impart soothing, salutary, comforting and consoling impact to the hard-pressed soul The *sāhitya, saṅgita, tāla* and constant practice are all within the reach of *bahujana*, the lay. There is the democratic appeal and coverage. Region or language, race, caste or gender, calendar or time are not barriers to the exercise. It could be solo or congregational. It needs no special equipment. Cymbals or a pair of hands to clap, a harmonium and mridangam or tabla, if available, are enough. It any of these could not be secured, god-given voice with its capability to traverse the three octaves suffices. Sacred days are welcome but they are not mandatory. Are there conditions or restrictions to inhale air, Vinobha Bhave used to ask? Even so, it is with devotional music. Congregational music and the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

clatter of cymbals whip up emotions and send up the people in a trance to higher regions where the 'self' gets annihilated. The repetitive sounds from cymbals exhilarate; the simple percussion whips up emotions; full-throated singing in chorus integrates hearts and minds of participants and time passes in happy communion with the Creator. The holy *saṅgama* of several hearts, minds, souls breathe in an atmosphere of divine charm that thrills and has few equals. Jealousy is banished; ill-will is driven out; pain and sorrow are forgotten; numerous men, women and children concentrate on a single endeavour without any thought of material issues. And when the devotional musicians reach the mandap or the temple, each one of the participants feel the truth of the song of apostle, Tondaradipodi Alwar and sing it with warmth of feeling and conviction.

'Acchuvai perinum vēṇdēn, Araṅgamā nagaruḷānē!'
[Even if You were to grant salvation or Heavens,
I would not part with this joy here and exchange it!]

Our seers have fully enjoyed the boons of devotional music and have bestowed countless *kirtans, nāmāvaḷis*, etc. for the benefit of posterity. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa advised,

'Sing with devotion the hallowed *nāma* of Lord.
Mountains of sins will vanish like vapour!' [Of course, if one wishes it!]

Saivite Apostle Appar [6-7th Century C.E.], whose profound wisdom exudes in everyone of his hymns, most challantly tells the Lord 'I have done my duty and now it is for you to worry about me!' He brings out the legal implications of barter, *inter se* contractual obligations and would not allow Him to rest content enjoying the fruits of prayers of devotees like tyrants and others who rule but rarely think of the subjects honestly. He says,

'It is my duty to serve Thee;
It is Thy duty to save me too!'

The concept is unexceptional and is more than two millennia ahead of such thinking and is indeed grand, revolutionary and unsurpassed! The Paramacharya Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi has clarified:

'Nāma is nothing but *Īswara*!
Chant Śiva as and when feasible.
It confers *śivam, maṅgalam* and *kalyāṇam.'*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The literature on devotional music is large. Confining for the present to some broad outlines, it is but proper to briefly advert to what has been said by the best authority on the subject in recent centuries who was himself a *bhāgavata,* saint, *vāggēyakāra* and an ardent and true *bhakta* of Rama, viz., Sri Tyagaraja of the Trinity :

'Devotion, associated with the ambrosia of *swara* and *rāga,* is verily paradise and salvation.' – *Kṛiti Swararāgasudha* [*Sankarābharanam*]

Those who have knowledge of *Nāda, Ōmkāra and Swara* which are nothing but Sadasiva are realized souls.' – *Rāgasudhārasa* [*Andolika*]

'*Saṅgita* has the potential to secure *sārupya*, Lord's Grace, glory and wealth' – *Saṅgita Śāstra Jñānamu* [*Mukhāri*]

'The body that does not float in the Ocean of Ineffable Bliss of Bṛhman is but a burden to earth.' – *Ānanda Sāgara* [*Garudadhwani*]

'*Bhāgavatas,* who lack knowledge of music [*rāga, tāla. jñāna, bhāva* - emotional appeal], real devotion and *jñāna* lead only the life of animals' –*Mariyāda Gadura* [*Sankarābharanam*]

Such sentiments have been given vent to by many luminaries as well as in *Bhagavata, Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, etc., It has also been held that *nāma saṅkīrtan* is best suited for the present on-going Kaliyuga. Purandaradasa, whose life is a beacon-light of spiritual exhilaration and attainments, has affirmed the same in song *Kaliyugadalli.* In his magnificent work *Rāmacaritamānasa,* Tulasidas advises singing in praise of Sri Rama as the best instrument to cross the ocean of *samsāra.* Authorities are a legion but the Lord himself has set His seal of approval and given expression to the view in the famous declaration :

'Nāham vasāmi Vaikuntē nā yōgi hṛdayē ravou I
Madhbhakta yatra gāyanti tatra tiṣṭāmi, Narada' II

A magnificent, marvellous, meritorious and matchless tribute to devotional **singers** [*gāyanti*] from music-crazy Lord Krsna Himself! No wonder it drew the cream of intellectual singers of the country, apart from saints, seers, apostles, like –

Caitanya Mahaprabhu
Jayadeva
Bhadrachala Ramadasa
Tulasidasa
Tukaram
Kabirdas
Sadasiva Brhmendral
Swami Narayana Tirtha
Tallapaka Annamacharya
Purandaradasa
Kanakadasa
Vijayagopalaswami

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bodhendra Swamigal	Sadguru Swamigal
Sridhara Venkatesa Arya	Carnatic Music Trinity
Arunagirinatha [*Tiruppugazh]*	Ramalinga Swamigal of Vadalur
Bhakta Mira	Sri Andal, etc.

There have been massive output of books, treatises, songs, etc on devotional music which taken together would, perhaps, exceed in volume the combined output in any single subject in the whole world other than Bharat. While classical songs need the attention of the better equipped people for fuller understanding, simple *nāmāvaḷis* [mere repetitive singing of holy names] serve the simple folks – e.g. 'Vittala, Vittala, Jey Jey Vittala'. *Utsava Sampradāya* outlines the procedure and content for conducting *bhajans* such as

Puṇḍarīkam	[Hailing the Lord]
Tōdayamangalam, etc. *kīrtans*	
Divyanāma saṅkīrtan	
Dōlōtsavam -	*Pūja* and music with lamp as symbol of god.
Ūnjal, hārati, etc.	[Symbolic swing for the Lord with music, offering scented sticks, camphor, food, etc.]
Maṅgaḷam	[Auspicious conclusion with music]

A classical *bhajan* by competent *bhāgavatas* present the mastery of the jeweller, the artistry of the dancer, the subtle attention to details of the sculptor, the grandiloquent vision of the poet and the exquisite space-flight *manōdharma* of the musician of standing, repute and mastery. One could see the integrated *advaitic* union of hearts and souls of the performers and the devotees present, the exquisite thrill of Holy Presence, the sweet loss of memory of 'self' and the wonderful experience of the Infinite among all the participants. And foremost of all, the *bhāgavatas* perform it all for *sarvē janā sukhinō bhavantu* - the welfare of all - with little or no remuneration. It is dedication pure and simple. India had a surfeit of earnest, noble, qualified, dedicated devotional singers throughout its history and every village boasted of parties who were at the temple, prayer hall or the street for *bhajan* on sacred days and months, festivals and celebrations. They delighted in celebrating the Lord's celestial wedding with Rukmini, Radha, Sita, etc. The duration ranged from a single day to three and perhaps more. The scene was soaked in and surcharged with *bhakti* or God-consciousness. A satisfied, contented, devout congregation melted away on conclusion and retired back home conscious of having been in communion with God for a while and participating in the blissful *bhakti yajña*, their hearts full with divine feelings and their pleasant faces betraying just that feeling of peace and joy one wishes for but also a regret that the wonderful experience and bliss had not lasted longer!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Devotional lyric is old and perhaps devotees sang then giving a musical *swarūpa* they are capable of or interested in with appropriate tunes as they do for the songs of Purandaradasa the music of which had been lost during the troublous days. Prof N. Krishnaswamy states that Gorakhnath [10-11th century], a disciple of Machindarnath, could be the **earliest composer** of devotional songs on *Sānkhya Yōga* in *Rāja Yōga* tradition. 'His uncompromising devotion to *yōga* and his *guru* finds echo in the *nirguṇa bhajans* of Kabir.' The songs dwell on meditation and realization of the one and only truth. The godly lives of a few great devotional singers are briefly described below to highlight dedication, devotion, propagation and continuity.

Mirabai [1504-1563]: What a conjuring name that has thrilled millions of far flung hearths and homes and surcharged man, woman and child with the absolute, abstract concept of pure, chaste *bhakti*! Hers is a household name, an honoured name that connotes pure adoration of the Lord, *bhakti* in its multi-splendoured, native excellence, music and lyric revealing her single-minded devotion to Mira Prabhu, the Lord of Brindaban. The oratory of lyric and the allure of music with the charming beauties of prosody present an ethereal, unmatched equanimity of pure love of god. Social status hindered her not; marital obligations deterred her not. She held out to the peoples of the world the *Rāja mārga* of *bhakti* and *ātma nivēdan*. Few would miss to recollect her enthralling music as and when Rajasthan is mentioned.

Andal [Goda Devi] : [716-732 or 733] : The Mira of South was born like Sita of Mithila amidst flowers of fragrance at Srivilliputtur, Tamil Nadu and was taken care of by the eminent Vishnuchitta, who was doing service in the temple. The beautiful child flowered into a worthy bride fit to be taken by the Lord Himself. She harboured intense passion of the purest fibre for the Lord from childhood. Mira surrendered her heart to the Lord and Andal surrendered everything to Him and diluted herself in Him! If the path of Mira was full of sharp thorns and societal hurdles, Andal encountered little resistance in her march to the bosom of Lord Sri Ranganatha. There is beauty and grace, *madhura śṛiṅgāra* and *nāyaka-nāyaki bhāva* in her effulgent life. She has legated juicy songs in her *Tiruppāvai* and *Nācchiar Tirumoḻi* in tamil which are the staple particularly for girls and women and are sung at temples and homes, in concerts and *bhajans* regularly. *Vide Yet Another Garland* for fuller details. The temple at Srivilliputtur where Andal's earthly life was spent is a noble structure with lavishly beautiful landscape and a high tower of towers! Worthy of a visit.

Tiru Jñānasambandar [6th century C.E.] : A *jñāna vṛddha,* a child prodigy, he spread perfumed *bhakti* through his 384 *padigams* sung in 22 *paṇs* [*rāgas*] which constitute the first three *tirumurais* and are sung regularly at temples, *bhajans* and concerts.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The glamorous life of just a decade and half has few parallels in the world. He was presumably in a hurry to rejoin the Lord and rejoined Him. He was a singer *par excellence* and Appar, the intellectual apostle hails him **Nalliśai Jñānasambhandan** [Sambhandan famous for his captivating music]. Fuller details in book *Yet Another Garland.* The Festival of 'Suckling the Child' - Sambhandan by Devi is celebrated at the temple at Sirkali grandly annually as *Titumulaipāl Utsav.* One gathers solid spiritual experience on the occasion. Worthy of a visit.

Manickavācakar [3rd Century C.E. or 660 C.E.] and Bhadracala Ramadāsa [1622 – 1680 C.E.] :

The former, an ardent lover of Lord Śiva was in far south and the latter, a Rama *Bhakta,* was in Andhra Pradesh. Both had something to do with governmental work and both were such dedicated devotees that they renovated using government funds the temples at Avudayarkoil in Pudukottai district and at Bhadracala respectively and were incarcerated. They got released by divine intervention. Both have left resplendent, lustrous songs of absolute devotion in tamil, and telugu and sanskrit which are fully in active use. Their devotion to god was unexcelled and their songs [*Tirvempāvai* and *kīrtans*] bear witness to their fully integrated approach to god. 'When I sing the soulful hymns of Manickavacakar, it is like sugarcane juice mixed with honey, milk and fruit essences which never surfeits', said saint Vallalar Ramalinga Swamigal. Ramadasa has been hailed by the venerable Saint Tyagaraja himself beautifully in songs *Kaligiuntegada* [*Kīravāni*] and *Kṣīrasāgara* [*Dēvagāndhāri*] For details the earlier *Garlands* may be perused.

Sri Periyalvar [c. 7th Century C.E.] : Four hundred and sixty-one songs of the saint occupy the pride of place in the great compendium *Nalāyira Divya Prabandham,* which conveys the elixir of *Bhāgavatam.* In his *Tirupallāṇḍu, vātsalya bhāva* is predominant as he is foster-father of Sri Andal and, in consequence, the father-in-law of God Himself! A nice honorific indeed!

Jayadeva [12th century – c. 1116 C.E.] : *Gīta Gōvinda*, widely-known, highly popular, immortal opera of Jayadeva is the staple of devotional singers. They constitute the Songs Celestial called *aṣtapadis* as each has eight steps. The 24 songs have been translated into many languages of the world too. It has merited as many as thirty-four commentaries and has inspired many others to come out with like compositions but his is the first and foremost to this day unsurpassed. He has used twelve *rāgas* and five *tālas* and has inscribed them in the songs as has been done in respect of *rāgas* by Muthuswami Dikṣitar. Jayadeva has given the full due to his remarkable devotional dancer-wife, Padmavati, in his divine

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

songs of eternal appeal, perhaps the single prominent composer of lofty eminence to give such a place to one's own spouse. [Of course, Sage Tiruvalluvar and Purandaradasa have paid tributes to their staunch wives.] The merit of *bhajans* reach its fascinating *crescendo* when Jayadeva's songs are sung.

Tallapaka Annamacharya [1408 – 1503 C.E.] : He is hailed as the Sankirtanacharya who composed 32000 songs of which 12000 are available duly inscribed beautifully on copper plates now with the Tirumalai Tirupati Devasthanams. The Tallapakka family presented the Todayamangalam *bhajana paddhati* [mode of singing devotional songs] which is in vogue to this day. Annamacharya was an Ocean of *Bhakti* to Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati. While the Tōdayamangalam *bhajan* songs had received wide popularity, the other songs of the great poet -devotee are yet to receive their due. Vide *Yet Another Garland* for fuller details.

Gujarat, etc. : Narasimha Mehta [1414-1480] naturally comes to mind with his song that captivated Mahatma Gandhiji, *Vaiṣṇava jana tō tēne kahiyē.* It has become nationally and even internationally famous having been connected with the historic prayer meetings of Gandhiji. There are many others worthy of mention.

Bengal & East India : Jayadeva is claimed by Bengal. Vidyapati, Chandidas [14th century C.E.], Rama Prasad [1723-1775] who inspired Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Kamalakanta and many others have produced spiritual food in Bengal. Shankara Deva and Madhava Deva presented devotional pieces in Assam.

Kabir : Eloquent in praise of the glory of Sri Rama, the mystic was seized of the ephemeral nature of materialism and the enduring boons of Spiritualism, love of all beings, purity in conduct and character and the blessings of kindness. Faith of man in God has been stressed as a precious possession to attain.

Śadāśiva Bṛhmēndrāl	**[1560-1762 c]**
Sadguru Bōdhēndra Swāmigal	**[1610-1692]**
Sridhara Venkatēsa Ārya	**[1630-1730]**
Sri Nārayana Tīrtha Swāmi	**[1675-1745 c]**
Marudhānallur Sadguru Swāmigal	**[1777-1817]**

These venerated saints could be hailed as the **Pancha Mahā Puruṣas** of *Bhakti Yōga* who have lent solid contribution to the codification, content and spread of devotional music. Their lives have been dealt with in the *Garlands. Bhajan sampradāya* as it obtains

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

in Tamil Nadu has been highly advanced by these venerable saintly souls and their works They lived godly lives for the prosperity and salvation of man and knew of nothing else, true to the adage that rains do occur because of the birth and advent of such men of god from time to time. The *Utsava Sampradāya* of Sri Tyagaraja, the honeyed songs of apostles of Siva [Nayanmars] and of Viṣṇu [Alwars] and the compositions of many others such as Arunagirinathar [c.1450 C.E.], Ramalinga Swamigal [1823-1874], Gopalakrishna Bharati [1811-1881] and many others have presented thrilling, enthralling songs in tamil. In fact, there is a virtual deluge of songs on Sri Ayyappan and other deities too.

Dāsakūtās of Karnataka: [14 –16th Centuries C.E.]:

Haridasas of Karnataka were ardent Vaisnavites and worshippers of Lord Krsna and are collectively hailed as '*Dāsakūtās* - Congregation of Servants of God'. Though Narahari Tirtha [1250 – 1335 C.E.], whose ideas, diction and rhythm find reflection in the songs of Tyagaraja, is reputed to be the originator of the Kuta, Sripadaraya [1422 – 1480] is hailed as the effective founder. The congregation comprises pearls of devotees, gems of composers who excelled in melody and rhythm and ardent propagators of devotion through honeyed songs. Unsettled political conditions robbed much of the lyrics and the music, which is a great loss to posterity. Vyasaraya, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa, Vadiraja, and other Dasas including Helaranakante Giriyamma [1691-1725] and Akkamahadevi have all left a huge store of devout juicy songs, which are the delight of musicians and devotees. The *swara vachanas*, comparatively simple and spiritual, of Nijaguna Sivayogi [1795-1839] and other Veerasaivas of Karnataka enriched the *bhakti* movement in the worship of Lord Siva.

Saint singers of Maharashtra:

Maharashtra has made a positive and remarkable contribution to devotional music and *bhajans.* It cold be said that *bhajans* reached their peak here with the famous songs called *abhaṅgs,* impregnated with lyrical beauty, splenderous fervour, vibrant appeal, captivating music and supportive percussion that could inspire the most uncouth human to dance in trance. The *Bhakti* Movement, called Varkari in Maharashtra, has contributed much most creditably. Men, women and children are in total communion with god. Sant Jñaneshwar, famous for his wonder commentary *Jñānēshwari,* and numerous others have left fabulously rich *abhangs* which are popular outside Maharashtra too. Jñāneshwar says, "Vision shall rest only on the Pure One; I see all else as diverse forms of that *Ātman* alone'. Fragrant, multi-hued flowers in glittering variety, sizes, shapes and charms grow in clusters as if they are there to represent the lustrous beauty of nature together without

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

feelings of self, ego, jealousy and rivalry. They appear for the pleasure of humanity and they disappear yielding place to fresh ones the next day. Even so, Annamacharya family contributed much successively. Even so again, Jñanesgwar was joined by brothers, Nivrutti and Sopan and sister Mukta in enriching the musical lore. Who can forget the venerable Namdev [1270-1350]? In the song *Pandhari nivāsa,* he declares, 'Let me live here in Pandharpur birth after birth to see Lord Vittoba and get merged in Him'. There was Eknath [1545-1591], Sant Tukaram [which role was taken by Sangita Kalanidhi Musiri Subramanya Ayyar in the film] [1598-1650], Samartha Ramadasa [[1608-1681] and many other distinguished devout souls who constituted a glittering galaxy which has illumined the pages of devotional music. There is exuberance of spirit, mode and presentation of devotional music in Maharashtra which has influenced similar endeavours outside its borders.

General : *Padams* of Kṣētrajña [17th century C.E.] and the exquisite songs of Tamil Composers such as the Sirkali Composers, Nilakanta Sivan, Papanasam Sivan, Kavi Kunjara Bharati and hundreds of others and the songs of the royal composer, Swati Tirunal Maharaja in sanskrit and other languages have enriched devotional music elevating it to great ethereal heights with successive lavish contribution.

It is difficult to gather a full impression of India without its temples, spiritual endeavours and music and all these three fundamental characteristics combine to make devotional music the *summum bonum* of Indian life, the *tour de force* of their lives and activities. Devotion and Indian life are inseparable twins, basic characteristics of the Indian. The intensity may vary but the lifeline shall never be absent. It may be expressive, explosive or subtle and symbolic.

Indian genius finds it difficult to segregate itself or part with devotion to god in entirety. [Just an anecdote or two to illustrate what has been indicated above. I happened to accompany a well educated Minister, a rationalist of standing, over three decades back. On reaching the confluence of oceans at Dhanushkodi in far south, he took a little sea-water in hand and sprinkled it on his head as orthodox people do, aspire for and feel glad about it. A gentleman who accompanied us said, 'Thank God, Minister arrived here and took the *prōkṣanam* [sprinkling of water] before *Rāhukālam* sets in!' The good Minister replied, 'Whatever be the time [*kālam*] of Rahu, our own time is more important'. His rationalist background, training and profession could not hinder his action on reaching the sea! Even our great first Prime Minister of Bharat, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wanted the ashes of his body be cast in the Ganges, etc. He might have willed it so for reasons not entirely spiritual or devotional but the basic root of the thought has its moorings in the ancient, more than two millennia-old, conviction on devotion.]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

[Just another point. Saint Tyagaraja and many other eminent souls of Bharat had taken to *uncchavṛtti* as part of their faith in the religious commands and practices. He was not a person without means of livelihood. He took to the practice in furtherance of his firm resolve to advance his attainment of the goal by and through all accepted canons. A bachelor in pursuit of acquisition of knowledge in *gurukulavāsa* had been ordained to follow such and similar rigorous standards of life whether he hailed from a princely family or otherwise. Even so, a *bhāgavata* had the right to regulate his practices and code of conduct. Dr. V. Raghavan, an erudite scholar and musicologist, states,

> 'Tyagaraja took the *vṛata* [vow] as part of the *sādhana* to lead the life of a mendicant, go about singing the praise of Sri Rama [*bhajana*] and live on *uncchavṛtti.* [This practice is reenacted till date at Tiruvaiyaru though as a formality. Several view it as base beggary, which it is not.] In *Vāridhi niku* [*Todi*] in *Pṛhlāda Bhakti Vijaya*, he says that he stretches not his hands for wealth. In *Kattujesinavu* [*Atāna*], he calls himself desireless Tyagaraja [*niṣkāma*]. The greatest delight Tyagaraja yearned for was to follow the temple deities during the festival processions singing songs on them. In *Ennallu ni dova jutu* [*Kāpi*], he says one born in that high mission cannot change over to a low calling under stress of adversity. "The vendor of fragrant flowers cannot start selling firewood – *pūlammi bratikinavāru pullalamma bilvarāru!*'

'Do *kirtan* every night'
"Bhajō Rādhē Gōvind!
Rādhē Gōvinda bhajō Rādhē Gōvind"
[- Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj]

Hiranmayīm Lakṣmim (*Lalithā*) : 'I offer my prayers always to Goodess Lakshmi and spurn any resort to vulgar men'. He waxes eloquently on the glories of Lakshmi and holds the magic picture of the Goddess of Wealth before his dutiful wife who entertained a womanly wish to have ornaments.

–Dikṣitar
–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Paintings of Musician–Artiste S. Rajam attain Immortality

Himalayam Academy Publications, Kapaa Islands, U.S.A. have undertaken the massive task of bringing to the knowledge of the world the rich legacy of Indian art. Sanmarga Iraivan Temple Church, which has branches in many other centres, has been spearheading this endeavour. Swami Subramonia of Kuwai Island Iraivan Temple has brought out a memorable, attractive publication on *Periapurāṇam* brimming with captivating and enchanting paintings and line drawings of the Sixty-three Apostles of Lord Siva. Coming to know of the memorable renown of Musician-Artiste S. Rajam, they contacted him through Devaki Muthiah, a devotee and direct and since March 1997, their monthly journal carries delectable drawings and paintings of Rajam. These massive, richly illustrated publications are in classical water colours and are valuable additions to the higher art.

The special feature of this undertaking is that after taking permanent negatives, all the paintings are capsuled and safely lodged two hundred feet below ground level to be taken out seven decades hence. Worlds may change ; culture and civilization may change ; but these precious drawings kept in the bosom of mother earth would reveal and convey the rich heritage of our arts, art-based religion, and the memorable contributions of S. Rajam, artiste-musician, *guru* and lecturer, in all their virgin beauty.

Krishnamurthy : Crown of rubies, kasturi paste on forehead, koustabha ratnam, dancing tulsimāla (garland of sacred basil), curly dancing ringlets on forehead, lotus on navel, ornamental waist-band, bracelet, anklets, pitambar-clad and playing on flute, Krishna!

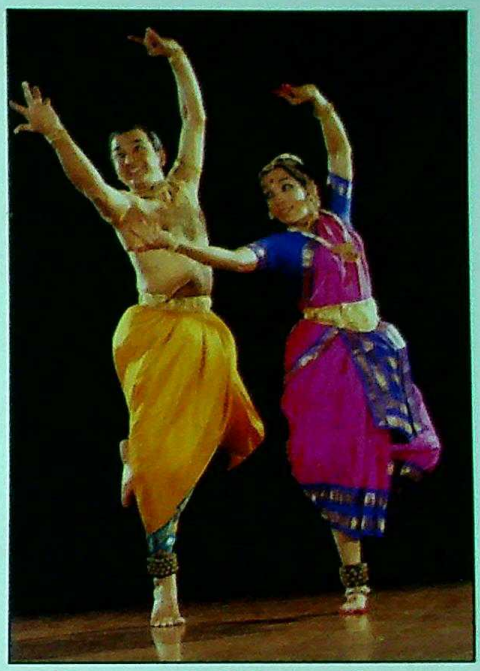
–Purandaradasar

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

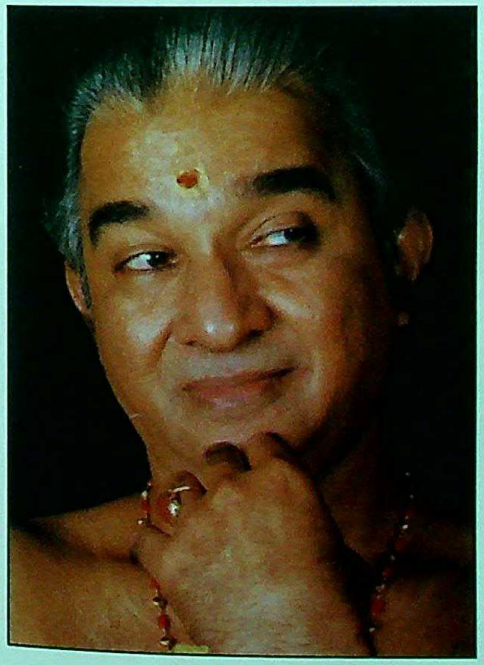
CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

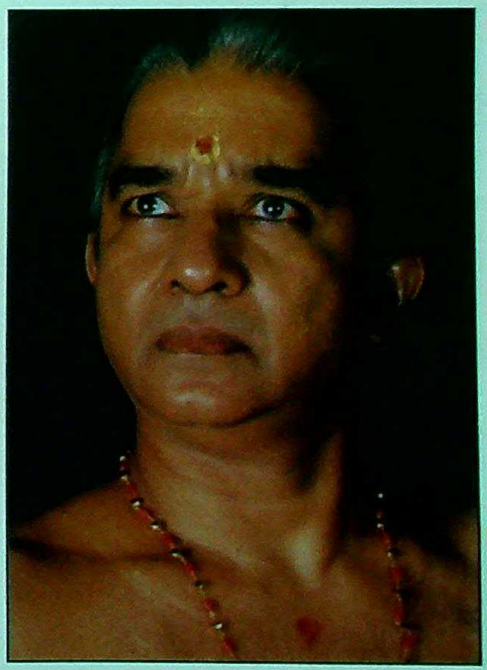
Saraswati



Shanta & Dhananjayan



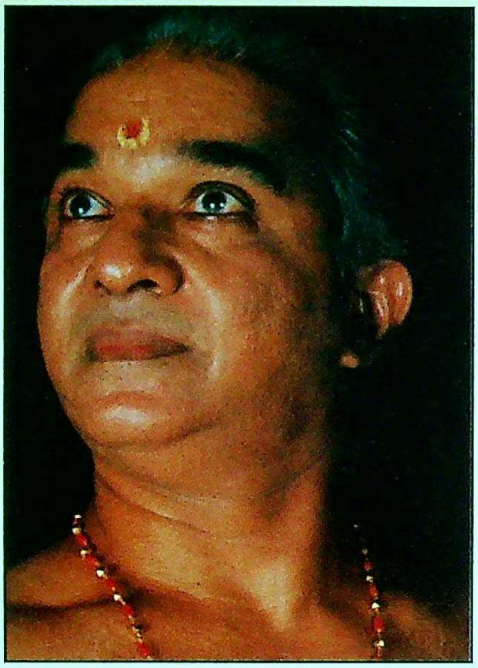
Sringara



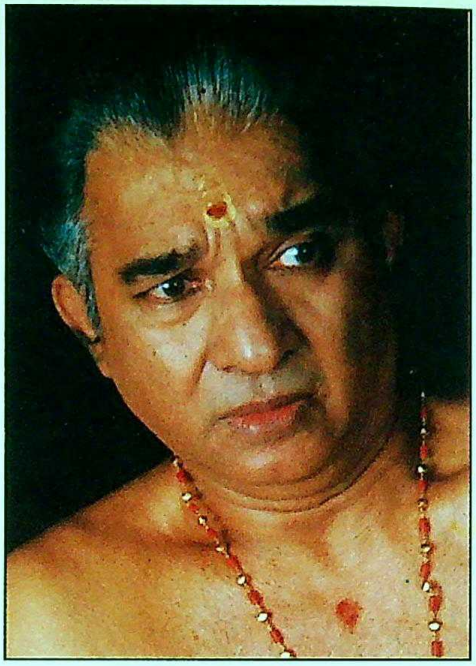
Roudram

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

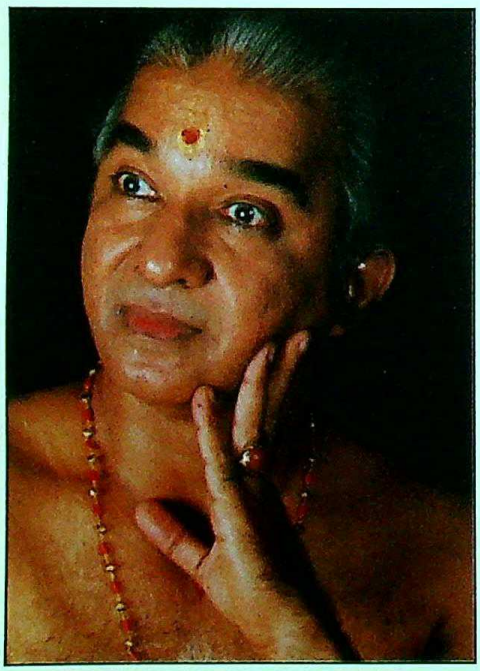
Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri



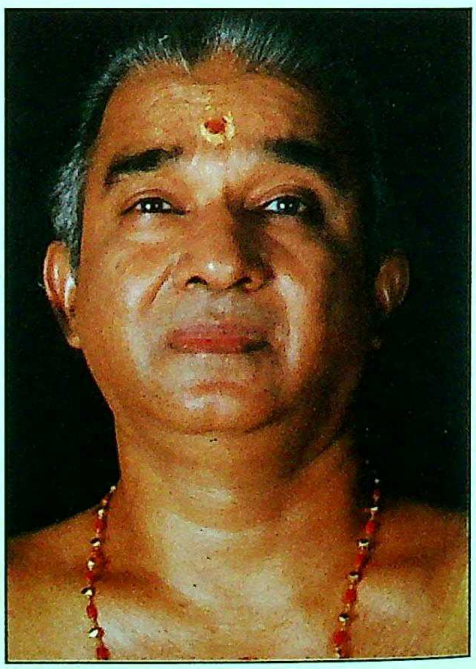
Veeram



Bhayanakam



Adbhutam

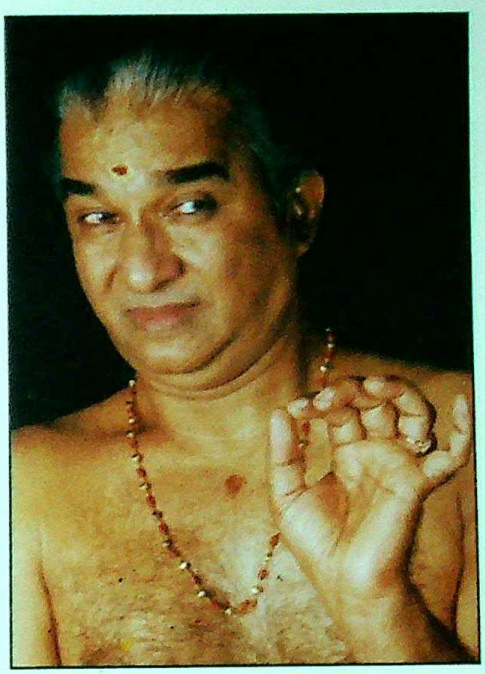


Karuna

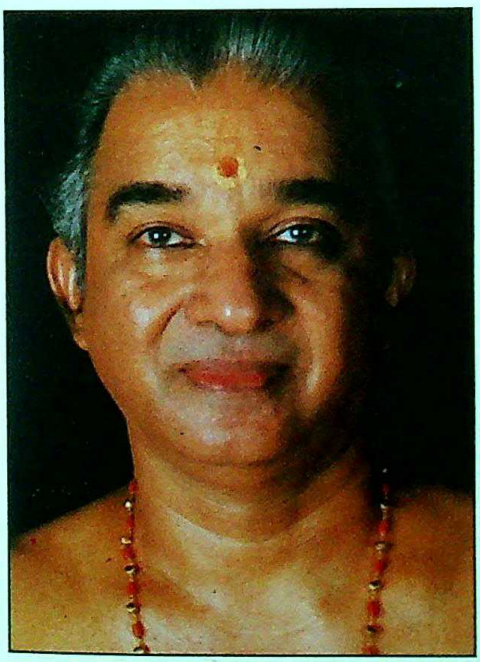
CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

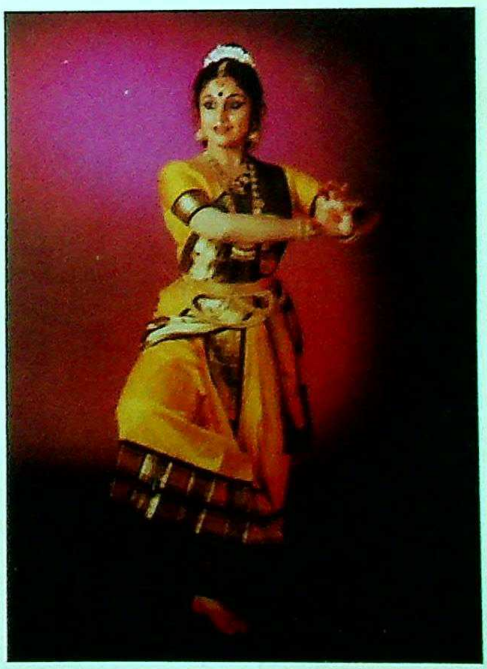
Hasyam



Beebhatsam



Saantham



Chitra Visweswaran

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Purandaradasa's wife offering nose ring to a brahmin

Purandaradasa with disciples

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Palghat C.S.Krishnamurti – Mridangist: [b.September 1937]

Parent	:	Palghat C.A.Subba Ayyar [*guru* to Palghat Mani Ayyar] and Minakshi Ammal
General education	:	S.S.L.C.
Training in percussion	:	Father Palghat Mani Ayyar and Palghat Raghu – all stalwart percussionists.
Debut	:	At Kollengode in 1950 accompanying Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, the Sangita Kalanidhi, whose love of young practitioners is proverbial.
Posts held	:	Tutor, Swati Tirunal College of Music in 1961 and retired as Principal of the same institution in 1992
		Presently Head of the Department of Mridangam, Chitrai Tirunal College of Music, Trivandram.

Krishnamuri has accompanied prominent artistes on All India Radio and at other venues and was honoured by the Tourism Commission in 1994. He has trained many disciples.

***

R. Krishnamurti [*Kalki*] – Musicologist/Composer/Critic: [September 9,1899 - April 5, 1954]

There is indeed a magical, mystic, overwhelming dominance of the popular number '9' in the prime dates of this life, the numerological significance of which is intriguing. It looks as if the nine Goddesses of Arts and Sciences according to Greek and Roman mythology, *nava bhāvas* and the *Nava grahas* were all present auspiciously in the illustrious life spread over five and a half decades enveloping such diverse fields of cerebral activity and creative brilliance as writer, critic, journalist, editor, organizer, freedom-fighter, musicologist, lyricist, composer, tamil savant and above all, a gentleman of robust culture and enlightened thought, speech and action. Profoundly involved in classical Carnatic music in its pristine days, his critiques were the envy of professionals and sweet, aromatic *pāyasa* [sweet pudding]. Not infrequently the critiques were not so very palatable to a few when

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

shortcomings and blemishes were presented with subtle punch. He composed songs in tamil which have caught the ever-green imagination of the public and remain popular to this day. His contribution in diverse fields has been memorable.

A born freedom fighter, he underwent imprisonment thrice in pre-Independence days. Destiny, quite unusual to its normal ways, guided the willing man to the most appropriate elite places in every walk of life. He came under the influence, among political crusaders, of Rajaji [Chakravarti Rajagopalachari], Dr. T.S.S. Rajan, V.V.S.Ayyar, the super revolutionary, etc., among tamil savants Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaram Mudaliar and T.K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, among constructive workers like Sadasivam, spouse of Dr. M.S.Subbulakshmi, among journalists like S.S.Vasan of *Ānanda Vikatan* and among top artistes like Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi. The robust bud of a creeper from the delta of Ponni [Cauvery] [and he came to be called Ponniyin Selvar] got entwined around herculean pillars in diverse walks and of cerebral eminence, No wonder, it blossomed into a remarkable flower of multi-coloured hues, shedding fragrance and lustre.

As a writer, he wielded a facile pen; His language was fresh, felicitous and fascinating and it flowed like the River Cauvery during the *Ādi Perukku* [Festival of Freshes in the month of Adi] penetrating, probing and resplendent in concept, captivating in style, rich in diction, dynamic in presentation and conjuring to the vast, ever-increasing concourse of readers of all hues. Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati was his model and mentor *in absentia.* His writings covered prose and poetry, novel, short story, essay, travelogue, biography and many more and songs. His description of imagery was alluring, the plots drawn from native gardens and groves dexterously woven into the web of his enchanting creations were arresting. His serials were the most sought-after feasts. Passionate admirer of Bharati, keen, committed follower of Mahatma Gandhiji and a devoted admirer of Rajaji, he espoused noble, enduring causes throwing himself heart and soul into each such as –

Propagating the messages of leaders like Gandhiji and Rajaji and implementing constructive programmes through *Navasakti, Ānanda Vikatan, Kalki* and other papers and magazines;

Bringing out biographies of leaders like Gandhiji [*Māndarukkul Oru Manidar*] and Rajaji [*Nāttukkoru Pudalvar*].

Translating Gandhiji's *My Experiments with Truth* into tamil titled *Satya Sōdanai.*

Constructive work at Tiruchengodu Asram, raising memorial to Bharati, starting Kamban Kazhagam, Tamil Revival movement, Tamil Isai movement and many others.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

His spirited emotional integration of mind and action with every cause he espoused was remarkable. This multi-faceted person was R.Krishnamurti, the centenary of whose birth was celebrated with much enthusiasm. A road in South Chennai is named after him. Krishnamurti was a musical personality, musicologist, composer, critic and *rasika,*

***

Divine charm reigns and rules in union with the solemn stillness of a tranquilizing morn, elegantly impregnated with the virgin perfume wafted by budding flowers blushing unseen in privacy like a rustic girl on her first meet with her beloved in that calm and cool environment. Just a selective sprinkling of humanity is seen in silhouettes on the streets in the fading light of yesterday's full moon even as the initial batch of disciplined birds rouse themselves with lively chirping full of notes of diverse sounds to dress up and commence their day-long, duty-conscious flights. From the upper floor of an aesthetic home, wafts sweet strains of the voice of Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi singing the lilting song *Kāṛṛinilē varum Gītam* of Kalki. Its rapturous melody, arresting *sāhitya* and charming *saṅgita*, elegant simplicity and virgin finesse enchant and captivate. The fleeting feet linger awhile, victims of melody, with *adwaitic* involvement. The song of Kalki sung by the well-chosen artiste enamours the *rasika*, engulfs his noble emotions and enslaves his heart and soul into a musical trance with embalming, therapeutic effect! That is *saraṇāgati* in its truest sense. Is it to the lyric or to the melody? Nay, it is to both, each in inseparable wedded union to the other, embellishing each other like the wedded Indian couple. What a song it is, simple in *sāhitya*, delectable in conception and true to the cultured native soil! That song of Kalki was sung in the film, *Meera,* a musical extravaganza of vast reach, hilarious popularity and matchless originality. Kalki's songs sung by M.S.S. include-

Sarācaram unnai yāvum
Brindāvanattil Kaṇṇan
Maravēnē ennaḷilumē
Kaṇḍadundō Kaṇṇan pōl
Vaṇḍādum sōlai tanil.
Udal uruga uḷam uruga
Kaṇṇan līlaigal śeivānē
Tavamum palittadammā
Deiva Tamiḻ nāttinile
Mānilattai vāḻa vaikkavanda, etc.

Five decades and a half had lapsed and they are sung with acclaim insured against any *avarohana* of popularity. Sangita Kalanidhi D.K. Pattammal has sung Kalki's songs, viz.,

Pūngkuyil kūvudu śōlaiyil oru nāl,
Tiraikadal tūngumō, alai ōyādō,
Kuḷalōśai kēttāyō, kiḷiyē,
Bhārata puṇṇiyabhūmi, etc.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Dr. M.L. Vasantakumari, the third of the Vocal Lady Trinity, all Sangita Kalanidhis, has also sung his songs like *Māyam vallavan Kaṇṇan.*

Simple felicitous lyric of pure virtuosity, graceful concepts, classical catchy tunes, elegant rendition, and fascinating amalgam of *sangita-sāhitya-bhāva-rasa* in a form assimilative to cognoscenti and lay are some of the finest characteristics of the songs of Kalki and those who sang them. It is difficult to ascribe or apportion the himalayan popularity of these songs individually either to the composer or to the singer as it is impossible to segregate the waters after the confluence of the Ganges with the Yamuna or the Bhavani with the Cauveri or the meaning from the word. That is the virtue and strength of Indian music. No wonder the eminent Lata Mangeshkar and others feel that a much valuable asset is being lost with films switching over to odd tunes with poor compositions of little value. Kalki, hailed as the child of Ponni [River Cauvery], could not but be sentimentally a musical enthusiast.

Though he did not spring out of a family of musicians, nativity, environment, and innate genius moulded him into a vibrant musical soul of high stature commanding as much respect in musical circles as in languages and journalism. Even as a boy, he sang with gusto songs of Subramanya Bharati, his inspiring idol. Could he be described as a *Jñāna vṛddha?* A *lakṣya*-based critic, he loved art and artistes for its/their ennobling, elevating contribution and services. Wedded as he was to the pristine glory of ethical India and its ineffable arts, he was averse to stoop to base commercialization of art. Ardent lovers looked forward to his reviews of concerts that glittered with spiced pun and punch, thrust and wisdom. Here are some specimen of his weighty observations:

> 'When I heard Sri Ariyakudi Ayyangarval, it was like witnessing the rush of freshes in the month of Adi in river Cauvery, the flow of music resembling the grandeur of waves.'
>
> 'When I listen to the recordings of M.S. Subbulakshmi, I am reminded of Sir C.V. Raman's view that she dilutes herself in the song and enlarges into a musical river. The tiny spring emanating in caves and crevices of mountains flows sometimes with elephantine majesty, other times with the leisurely gait and splendour and unruffled grace of royalty as if in ponderous dilemma and regal ethos – leaving a doubt whether it is in flow or is stagnant. Many a time, it rushes down with avalanchial, cascading speed.'
>
> 'It is said that one who performed in prior births *abhiṣēka* with honey is invested with a voice of enticing melody. But Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar could not be credited with any such act. He should have presumably carried two pots of honey – one in each hand simultaneously-and performed the *abhiṣēka*, since his voice rings with twin sounds [*irattai nādam*] [in an allusion to his voice constraints!].'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Sweetness blends with majesty, unexcelled *laya jñana*, well modulated *gamakas*, clarity in pronunciation and a natural emotional identity with *sāhitya-rāga bhāvas* and her natural emotional identity with music enriched with intensive practice' mark the rendition of D.K. Pattammal.

When Rukmini Arundale appeared on the stage to present *bharatanāṭya*, I wondered whether it could be the celestial stage. There was such grace and dignity of the old and the charm and allure of the modern.'

His passion for *bharatanāṭya* was so intense that he got his daughter Anandi trained in the art. There was a happy confluence, co-existence and camaraderie of language, arts and patriotism, intuition and inspiration.

❋❋❋

Place of birth	:	Puthamangalam in Thanjavur district.
Parents	:	Ramaswamy Ayyar, village accountant and Thayyalnayaki
Education	:	A fiery speech of Dr. T.S.S.Rajan, veteran freedom fighter spurred Kalki to leave the school to take up national work.
Literary output - Novels	:	*Vimala,* a novel written while young. *Kaḷvanin Kādali* *Sivakāmiyin Sabhatam* *Ponniyin Selvan* *Pārtibhan Kanavu* *Tyāgabhūmi* *Alai Ōśai, Amara Tāra,* etc.,
Honours	:	Doctorate by Viswabharati Presidential Award Sahitya Akademy Award Padma Bhushan by the President of India, Commemorative Stamp in 1999, Naming of road after his name, etc.,

Hundreds of stories and other writings illumined weeklies, monthlies, etc. and have been translated into English, German and Russian. That a good start is half the battle of life won proved true in his life. After his memorable association with the popular *Ānanda Vikatan,* a weekly of lavish popularity and message then, he started his own weekly *Kalki* which carries the glory attached to his name. His life was one of alround sustained initiative,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

successive waves of cerebral inspiration, achievement-oriented dynamism. His novels, some of which were filmed too with success, have immortalized his name. He was fortunate to be born when the country needed the flourish and might of the pen to aid in winning its freedom and Kalki supplied them in a hefty way. His musical life was one of inspired dedication and lustrous success.

❋❋❋

Vasa Krishnamurti – Vainika: [August 1923 – 1973]

Father and Guru	:	Veena Venkoba Rao, Teacher in Veena, Maharaja's College of Music, Vizianagaram.
Debut	:	1943

Krishnamurti enjoyed felicity both in Carnatic and Hindustani music and was the President, Bharati Gana Sabha, Visakhapattinam. *Sruti* and *laya suddham* were the prime assets of the performance of the vainika. Pappu Venugopala Rao states that Ajjada Adibatla Narayana Rao, Principal of the Maharaja's College, had real and great admiration for the art of Krishnamurti and that *sphuritam, pratyāhāram* and *gumbhitam* types of *gamakas* were favourites of his graceful play.

❋❋❋

Pallavur S. Krishnan – Vainika: [b. October 23, 1942]

Place of birth	:	Pallavur in Palghat district
Parentage	:	P.V. Sankara Ayyar and Subbammal – Father was musically trained under Mani Bhagavatar
Training in music	:	At Chembai Memorial College of Music, Palghat Gana Praveena [veena] from SST College, Trivandrum Flute under Sankara Panickar
Debut	:	Devi Temple, Koodalur, Palghat – veena recital
Post held	:	Veena Professor, SST College - 1976-1998

Krishnan has been presenting veena recitals on All India Radio and elsewhere.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

[Mummadi] Krishnaraja Wodeyar III of Mysore: Patron: [1794 – 1868]

'The royal court at Mysore was but a faint copy of that of Thanjavur. The patronage tradition was in a sense a continuation from where Thanjavur ceased to steal the show. The royal patronage in Mysore really began with Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. By that time, Thanjavur royal family had become a spent force and musical gravity had shifted to Madras.'

-Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao in *Phoenix.*

[*Vide* pages 81-83 of *The Fragrant Garland* – [1996] on Mysore taking over the leadership in the field of arts from Thanjavur captioned '***The Cauvery Flows Westwards!***'] Vijayanagar Empire had been sacked with ruthless fury and razed to ground and Thanjavur had fully played out its part with remarkable glory and had started gasping for breath. The time for Mysore to take up the reins of husbanding arts and artistes had arrived with the exit of Tippu Sultan. A fillip to a memorable renaissance in the vibrant history of art in South India was to commence, it would seem. The British restored the throne to the old Wodeyar family of Mysore, which had been unseated by Hyder Ali. Krishnaraja Wodeyar was yet a boy and his coronation restored the era of cultured royal presence. Cultural renaissance had begun from where Thanjavur was to leave. Born to Chamaraja Wodeyar, the young prince had the misfortune of seeing his father and others in virtual imprisonment. There was practical wisdom, perhaps. Arts and artistes from the different parts of the South started flocking at Mysore with the anointing of the new king. Krishnaraja himself was a linguist well versed in sanskrit, kannada, marathi, persian and english and was an able scholar in literature, philosophy, *āgama, jyōtiṣa*, music, etc. He had authored over sixty works and the period saw a flood of over a hundred other works coming out. As was the king, so were the people! The king encouraged artistes and scholars spending his time with them as Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi was accustomed to do regularly. This gave a fillip to all fragrant activities. Arts that starved and languished for want of patronage came up for substantial attention as many of the rulers themselves were music-lovers, musicians, composers, and scholars with progressive outlook. Arts took over as guns were silenced. Melody entered as the congenial environment it needed was restored. Artistes flooded the courts as sepoys had exited! Musical instruments, particularly veena, captivated the minds of the rulers and the ruled as instruments of destruction had bidden goodbye. Musicians of renown graced his durbar including Lalgudi Rama Ayyar, a direct disciple of Tyagaraja and his sons Guruswami Ayyar and Radhakrishna Ayyar – all prominent vidwans of the celebrated Lalgudi clan of maestros, Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Mugur Subbanna, Jenjamrtam Subbayya, Alsoor Krishnayya [all vocalists], Sambayya, Anantasubbayya, Chikka Ramappa, Venkatasubbayya, Dodda Subba Rao, Rama Bhagavatar [all vainikas] and many others. It was a veritable galaxy and a positive musical

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

invasion activated and patronized by a musical king. Like Visiting Professors, another galaxy was seen off and on which included Pallavi Gopalayya, Vina Kuppayyar, Fiddle Ponnuswamy, Peria Vaithi and Chinna Vaithi. Patronage was extended to hindustani musicians too. Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan gave a demonstration at the Music Academy, Chennai on Deecember 22, 1995 on the compositions of the ruler. A devotee of Sri Chamundeswari Devi, the ruler composed many *kṛitis and jāvalis* on the deity. Srikantan further said that *jāvalis* [a lively form of composition of erotic content fit for singing and for dance] had their origin in the South at Mysore.

The learned musicologist B.V.K. Sastry, who graciously helped me with all these details, mentions that on a request from Swati Tirunal, Krishnaraja reportedly sent two hindustani musicians, Nathuram and Nandaram to the former's court. Thus the ruler with passionate fervour for arts installed Mysore as a cradle, nursery and bee-hive of all musical activity.

❋❋❋

Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV of Mysore: Patron of Arts: [1884-1940]

On the demise of his father Chamaraja Wodeyar in 1894, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV became the ruler of Mysore State at the age of eleven initially with his mother Kempa Nanjamma Anni as regent. His period saw multi-sided development in all directions. Arts received impressive support and dusserah and other festivals were upstaged as gala celebrations which attracted people from different parts. Patronage was extended to Hindustani and Western music also. Illustrious musicians such as Bidaram Krishnappa. Mysore Vasudevacharya, S. Rama Rao, Belakavady Srinivasa Iyengar and Muthiah Bhagavatar were among the vocalist *āstāna vidwans*. Mysore Seshanna, Subbanna, Venkatagiriappa, Lakshminaranappa, Shivaramiah, Sundara Sastry and R.S. Keshavamurthi were among the vainika *āstāna vidwans*. Eminent vidwans from other parts like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar, Tiger Varadachariar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu and Madurai Ponnuswamy Pillai were among the numerous visiting top musicians. Hindustani musicians like Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan, Gohar Jan, Hafiz Khan [all vocal], Barkatullah Khan [sitar] and numerous others were *āstāna vidwans*. The Palace Band was nourished further with the creation of a Carnatic music section under Vidwan Venkatagiriappa] besides the Western music segment, Dr. Otto Schmidt and later Dr. Mistowski heading it. The ruler provided active encouragement to innovative compositions, styles and presentation.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

General: *'Vanōkki vaḷum ulagellām mannavan Kōlnōkki vaḷum kuḍi'* (Kural - 542) clarified Sage Tiruvalluvar. His observation, made in all his ancient wisdom, holds true to this day that people – ryots –depending on rains for agriculture and sustenance are those who look up to, and are dependent on, the righteous king for support since vagaries of monsoons were a constant stark reality. The same holds good, in fact, much more true, in respect of artistes!

***

R. Krishnaswamy – Vocalist: [b. May 29, 1922]

Place of birth	:	Cochin
Parents	:	Ramayyar and Minakshi Ammal [both musical souls.]
Musical training	:	Initial training under T.K.Narayana Bhagavatar. *Gurukulavasa* under the distinguished scholar T. Lakshmana Pillai - 1937-1940 Gayaka Diploma and Gana Bhushana Diploma at the Swatī Tirunal Sangita Academy [College of Music], Trivanantapuram.
Debut	:	1935 Sri Rama Navami festival, Cochin
Posts held	:	Music teacher, Swati Tirunal Academy Staff Artiste, All India Radio [A grade artiste] 1952-1982
Honours and titles	:	T.V.Subba Rao Memorial Award, Music Academy, Chennai in 1980, Kerala Sangita Natak Academy Award in 1995.

Krishnaswamy was in the first batches for both the diplomas he got from the then newly founded Swati Tirunal Academy. *Guru* T.Lakshmana Pillai was a scholar, renowned musicologist and was hailed as Tamil Tyagaraja – *Vide A Garland*. His prime disciple, Krishnaswamy, as *guru dakṣina* in a way, provided notation to his divine songs and published them. He took deep interest in the captivating songs of Nilakanta Sivan and had done much to propagate and popularize compositions of eminent *vāggēyakāras* on the radio. Has trained many disciples and has had a very active musical life. Many sabhas have honoured him for his contribution.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

P.R. Kumara Kerala Varma – Pedagogue in Music/Vocalist: [b. November 18, 1940]

Place of birth	:	Pallam Palace, Tiruvanantapuram
Parents	:	E. Ramavarma Raja of Ennakad Palace & Seetha Devi Tampuratti of Pallom Palace.
Training in music under	:	Mariappally Rudra Wariar & Vadakkanchery Rama Bhagavatar. Vecchur Hariharasubramania Ayyar & Mavelikkara Prabhakara Varma
Debut at	:	Mahadeva temple, Chengannur at the age of 13. Pre university course Ganabhushanam, Sangitabhushanam and Ganapraveen diplomas from Swati Tirunal Music College 1957-1965
Posts held	:	Professor in music in all the three music colleges in Kerala for 28 long years. Principal, Chembai Memorial Music College, Palghat [1991] & Swati Tirunal Music College, Tiruvananthapuram [1992-1996].

Kumara Kerala Varma, having inherited the rich musical legacy of the palaces in Travancore, went on equipping himself stage by stage from all available sources and finally took on the Government of India scholarship in 1962 for specialised training under Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar who was closely connected with all the musical endeavours of Tiruvanantapuram. Has translated to malayalam *Pancharatna kṛitis* notated by *guru* Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar and is continuing such work further. It is not that he had confined himself to classrooms alone since he has accompanied his *guru* and has himself given concerts.

Retirement from service has little significance to one who has been a musical soul for over four decades. 'Once a teacher, always a teacher' is a safe epithet to qualify the life of Kumara Kerala Varma as he is presently Principal, Sri Chitrai Tirunal College of Music conducted by Swati Tirunal Sangita Sabha, Trivananthapuram and is taking classes elsewhere too. Has received the Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Award, 1993. Has been Chairman and Member for Post-graduate examinations of Delhi and Madurai-Kamarajar Universities.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

S. Lakshminarayanan Ayyar – Vocalist: [b. June 11, 1923]

Parents	:	Alwarkoil Subramania Ayyar & Lakshmi Ammal, a musician.
General education	:	Eleventh standard.
Studied music under	:	Nagaswaram Parameswara Panickar, Eraniel Chellappa Annavi KR. Kumaraswami Ayyar, Dodda Ramamurthi, Guntur & Varadaraja Ayyangar
Debut	:	At Srikanteswaram temple, Tiruvanantapuram in 1950
Posts held	:	Mullamuttil Bhagavatar [Court vidwan] Music teacher in schools Tutor, Chitrai Tirunal College of Music, Tiruvanantapuram

Lakshminarayanan Ayyar has been giving performances both on All India Radio and at other venues. Has been a judge for music competitions. Has coached many musicians and has been honoured twice for his services.

***

Prof. V. Lakshminarayana Ayyar – Violinist: [January 11, 1911 - December 4, 1990]

Many authorities would believe that violin, which has caught the imagination of Carnatic musicians and *rasikas* and has practically conquered and monopolized concert dais in the south of Bharat, is an instrument from the West. Others like Mysore Chowdiah and Parur Sundaram Ayyar have averred with conviction that it has been entirely a native musical instrument which would seem to have been refined with the passage of time. Anyhow, it came to positive popular use from the days of Baluswami Dikṣitar [1786-1859] and Vadivelu [1810-1845] of the Tanjore Quartette. Since then we have had maestros like Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar, Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, Mysore Chowdiah and many others – past and present. Professor V. Lakshminarayana Ayyar was one among the dynamic souls who handled the instrument with grace and foresight and had left a legacy making it a family possession.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Place of birth	:	Kuniyur [Kerala]
Parents	:	Vaidyanathan and Bṛhannāyaki
Musical training under	:	Gopala Bhagavatar Tirupāṛkadal Srinivasa Ayyangar Harikēsanallūr Muthiah Bhāgavatar
Posts held	:	Professor of Music, Jaffna College, Sri Lanka. Visiting Professor in universities.

Ayyar was an intuitive, innovative artiste with a grand vision. Not only was he an adept in handling the instrument in all its myriad, multi-dimensional intricacies and focus bringing out the juicy *rāga-bhāva* in all its splendiferous grandeur but was an expert in *laya*. The sobriquet *Pancha Nadai Pallavi* Lakshminarayana Ayyar earned speaks to his expertise. Ayyar had given solo recitals and special concerts with his musically talented and distinguished progeny, viz., Subbulakshmi Muthuwamy, Ganasaraswati, L.Vaidyanathan, Dr.L.Subramaniam and Dr. L. Shankar in India and abroad and given albums. He spread his immense passion for music and musical wisdom abroad and had left many disciples scattered in different countries.

The learned professor had composed *kritis, kīrtanas, rāgamālikas*, etc. He is the proud patriarch of a clan of prominent violinists in the family which has appropriated violin as its own! When one comes across such patriarchs of art, he is apt to be reminded of the truth of the couplet of Tiruvalluvar, 'What penance his father should have undergone to beget such a son!

❋❋❋

Dr. Lakshmi Podhuval –Pedagogue/Vocalist:

[b. September 17, 1951]

Place of birth	:	Chandamangalam, North Parur, Kerala
Parents	:	C. Balakrishna Podhuval & Sowdhamini.
Academic Qualification	:	Master of Arts in Philosophy, Delhi University
Training in music	:	Sangita Vidwan Diploma, Diploma in Pedagogy and Diploma in veena – all from the Government Music College, Madras. Ph.D. on the subject 'A Study of Music and Philosophy in

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

		Muthuswami Dikṣitar's *Kṛitis'* Advanced Training under Sangita Kalanidhi
		T.M.Theagarajan under a Government of India Scholarship
Debut	:	With sister at New Delhi while studying.
Posts held	:	Lecturer [Assistant Professor] [1978] in Vocal, then Theory & Practice, Sri Sadguru Sangita Vidyalaya, Madurai in 1978: Lecturer [1987] – Same faculty Selection grade Lecturer [1992] – Reader in 1999.

She has been taking classes for M. Phil students, etc. Has been an examiner both in theory and practical since 1986 and is on the Board of Examiners, Madras, Calicut and Baroda Universities.

Dr. Lakshmi Podhuval has inexhaustible aptitude and dedication for acquisition, assimilation and dissemination of musical knowledge and has been not only acquiring successively and successfully diplomas and degrees but has taken to teaching to spread and distribute it. Reservoirs exist not merely to impound waters but to distribute it as and when opportunity occurs to the deserving. Teaching is clearly her chosen field of expertise and activity. A linguist, the learned doctor has been presenting papers on issues relating to music at various forums. She has been giving concerts for All India Radio and sabhas. She is presently making a study of the compositions of Nilakanta Sivan and Gopalakrishna Bharati under a Senior Fellowship of the Government of India.

***

Madhavi Rajagopalan – Vocalist: [b. October 27, 1937]

Parentage	:	Karur Srinivsa Rajagopala Iyengar & Sithammal, a disciple of Tachur Ramanujachar.
Qualification	:	M.Litt on her thesis *Tamil Padam Composers' and their contribution to Carnatic Music.*
Training in music	:	Madurai T. Venkatesan & S.V. Soundarajan Padma Bhushan T.N. Swaminatha Pillai V.R. Krishnan and Sangita Kalanidhi R.K. Srikantan
Debut	:	All India Radio in March 1956

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Madhavi Rajagopalan learnt *padams* and *jāvalis* under T. Jayammal and Swarna Saraswati. This enabled her to complete her thesis with competence and secure M.Litt guided by the learned Prof. Sambamurti. She has been giving concerts on All India Radio and Doordarshan as well as at other forums besides presenting special features on compositions of individual *vāggēyakāras* and has specialized in lecture demonstrations on chosen themes like *Rāga lakṣana, padams* of South India and compositions of Vasudeva Kavi [18th century], on the basis of which lecture, this life of the Kavi has been inserted in Part II herein.

❋❋❋

S.R. Mahadeva Sarma & R. Rajasree: Violin Duo: [b. April 4, 1973 & July 13, 1974]

Place of birth:	:	Tiruvananthapuram
Parents	:	Prof. M. Subramania Sarma, a prominent violinist. Grandfather Mahadeva Ayyar and great grandfather Vaikom Krishna Ayyar were mridangists. In a family of percussionists, violin now assumes the prime seat!
Training in music under	:	Father
Qualification & Occupation	:	Both are Graduates in Arts. A diploma holder in music, Sarma is working as 'A' Grade Staff Artiste in All India Radio, Tiruvananthapuram. With post-graduate diploma in violin, Rajasree is B.High grade artiste.
Debut at	:	Abhedananda Asram, Tiruvananthapuram in 1984.
Concert abroad	:	Mahadeva Sarma to Sri Lanka with Dr. K.J. Yesudas
Award	:	Jayammal Madhavachari Award from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai in 1996 for 'Best Violinist'.

Music has been the staple in the family for generations. Mahadeva Sarma has accompanied top artistes and Rajasree too is providing accompaniment to many. Sarma can also play mridangam. The duo had the luck of intensive training under their father and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Sarma says that M.S. Gopalakrishnan is his model. With their father, they have given trio concerts too. The Lalgudi and Parur families are noted for such trio concerts. .The Sarma family is one such in Kerala.

***

Mali [T.R. Mahalingam] V. R.R. Keshavamurti: Walk out from concert dais!

Many episodes have been narrated [in the *Garlands* too] on the absurd tantrums of Mali which were all tolerated solely because of his dazzling flute play. It was once Rama Navami festival and senior vidwan R.R.Keshavamurti was on violin. Mali was delineating a *rāga* in short bits, with flute and violin alternating. Playing an especially tricky bid, he left it to the violinist. Instead of reproducing what he essayed, Keshavamurti gave his own version. Mali repeated his own and insisted on its reproduction by the violinist, which he declined. Saying that the violinist was incapable of reproducing it, **Mali snatched the violin** promising to reproduce it. Keshavamurti left the dais and **walked out.**

Indeed it was a **historic occurrence** in Carnatic music. After the running away of the **mythical** Emanatha from the Pandyan Court at Madurai to avoid a contest [in the *Tiruviḷayādal* episodes], there had been some musical constests and challenges which have been detailed in earlier volumes. This is a specific case of snatching of the instrument and walk out! Later the renowned musicologist and columnist, Sangita Kalaratna B.V.K.Sastry discussing the incident with Mali himself enquired:

> At least did you repeat the passage on the violin you took over?'
> 'No, I could not', said Mali laughing.

He had presumably no qualms in insulting a senior artiste. That is the measure of his personality! **Was Mali guilty of impertinence or was he mad?** The reader may decide. Not infrequently excellence in art takes refuge in homes not properly qualified to receive and host it.

***

Q. Was it the lone case of walk-out from a concert dais?

a. Top mridangist and a Sangita Kalanidhi, Dr. T.K. Murthy stood up, put on his upper cloth, asked his disciple to lift and carry his instrument and said half with sorrow and half in righteous anger, '*Idu pēchu kacchēriyā, pāttu kacchēriya*? You have all been going on giving

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

speeches *ad infinitum.* Am I to sit and go on gazing at my mridangam waiting for your sweet will to resume this concert?' He was correct as there was a concert of speeches Hamsadhwani Sabha organisers pacified him and the concert happily resumed!

b. The introduction was tediously long and tiresome and the designated chief speaker was visibly annoyed and upset being forced to wait endlessly. Fortunately the end to the introduction came at long last and the speaker casually said, least conscious of the mischief done by him and his speech, 'Now, I call upon our distinguished Chief Speaker to give his address'. The gentleman rose up, **quietly gave his residential address and resumed his seat ! Action speaks better than words or swords!**

[Source: Connoisseur, the late Venkateswariah, U.S.A.]

c. Chikka Rama Rao [1892-1946] was a *pallavi pandit,* whose life has been extensively dealt with in *Another Garland* - pages 239-240. B.V.K. Sastry recounts:'The khanjari vidwan, a loudmouth, was rumoured to have made unflattering comments about Mysore-based musicians. Consequently the concert started amidst an air of [tense] curiosity. The khanjari vidwan sat brimming with confidence and even contempt. During improvisation by Rao, the percussionist looked uncomfortable. By *tani āvartanam,* he knew he was on treacherous ground. It was customary for percussionists to conclude synchronising their play at a point. He tried and tried but that fine point eluded him! Excited and enraged, with an angry growl, he **threw away the khanjari and walked out!'** [Had he done it with a tennis racket, he would have been heavily penalized. Lo! Music is presumably free from all such salutary shackles! Freedom has free rides in the field of *manōdharmic* music!]

❋❋❋

Malladi Family of Musicians – Malladi Brothers – Vocalists:

Malladi Sriramamurti was a noted Carnatic musician and *harikatha* exponent in Andhra Pradesh. He was a close associate of another exponent, Musunuri Surya Narayanagaru. He was giving performances on All India Radio since 1945 till advanced age prompted him to bid goodbye to concerts and settle at Eluru. The musical asset was passed on by him intact to his four sons, the first of whom is Malladi Suribabu.

Born on March 5, 1912 at Eluru, Suri Babu commenced giving concerts even at the tender age of ten. He entered All India Radio, Vijayawada initially as a programme announcer

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and subsequently became a Staff. Fortunately he became a disciple of the top reputed and respected vocalist [now no more], Voleti Venkateswarulu and was giving regular concerts till 1995. Is 'A' grade vidwan and torch-bearer of the renowned Voleti style of music. He learnt from Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Sripada Pinakapani too. His brother, Malladi Narayana Sarma has been with All India Radio for about two decades.

Sons of Suri Babu and Sukhanya, Srirama Prasad and Ravi Kumar are the Malladi Duo - Brothers now under reference. Both are post graduates in music and 'A' grade vidwans. Inheriting the musical legacy of their grand father and of Pammy Gurumurti Sastri, the Brothers had intensive training under their talented father Suri Babu. Presently they are having specialized training under Sangita Kalanidhi Nedunuri Krishnamurti. Sri Rama Prasad is with All India Radio, Vijayawada as staff musician. They are giving concerts on All India Radio, Doordarshan and sabhas in large numbers. They adhere to the style of Dr. Sripada Pinakapani, preceptor to both Voleti Venkateswarulu and Nedunuri Krishnamurti. Malladi Brothers have garnered bucketful of prizes successively from many forums. The youthful duo have a bright future.

Places and Dates of birth	:	Srirama Prasad was born at Unguturu on June 12, 1971. Ravi Kumar was born at Pippara in Andhra Pradesh on March 14, 1973
Debut	:	1998 at Saraswati Gana Sabha, Kakinada

***

Dr. S. Mallika – Vainika & Pedagogue: [b. April 21, 1952]

Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts [History/Music] First rank Master of Music [Veena] again first rank Ph.D. on thesis 'Compositions of Patnam Subramania Ayyar'.
Practical training	:	Under [Karaikudi] Veenai Lakshmi Ammal [for 13 years], Ramanathapuram Sankara Sivam, Ranganayaki Rajagopalan, Rajeswari Padmanabhan, Dr. K.S. Subramaniam and T.M.Theagarajan.
Post held	:	Reader, Sri Sadguru Sangita Vidyalaya Music College, Madurai
Debut	:	At Benares in 1973 on the Dikshitar Day

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Dr. Mallika is presenting a large number of veena concerts on All India Radio and outside. She has been a teacher for over seventeen years, an examiner and a judge for different categories of examinees appearing from universities, colleges and institutions. A competent teacher, she has inherited the excellence in the styles of many distinguished vainikas and musicians under whom she had received training. Is a vocalist too and can play mridngam.

❋❋❋

Karaikudi R. Mani – Percussion maestro:

Karaikudi Mani is a unique personality in the field of percussion. He is the only top percussionist with a dark, flowing, well-groomed beard, the very sight of which declares the man who nourishes and nurses it and his maturity. [The Indian has always venerated persons with beard.] He is an intuitive, inspiring, *manōdharmic* percussionist ever in pursuit of the best and the fresh. Calm, unruffled, decorous, free from stage manners, he is a brilliant accompanist and renowned soloist with his time and attention ever focussed on research and adventure to present the message of percussion to a larger sphere of appreciation in greater focus. He is the only professional musician to edit and publish a journal on his own successfully. He has opened branches of his institution in United Kingdom and Australia to teach percussion. And he is staunch in his devotion to and reverence of his spiritual guru and guide, Sri Surajananda like T.H. Vinayak Ram's dedication to the Kanchi Paramacharya. Incidentally both were co-students too for a time.

His *tīrmānams* [improvised rhythmic patterns of small and long syllables repeated thrice to mark a division], *moras* and *kōrvais* [leading to the rhythmic finale] are devilrous. His fingering is most soothing as well as perplexing in tempo, variations, etc. Above all, he is a liberal in approach though he percusses [forcible tapping of the instrument]! His presenation is pleasing, rich in artistry, virtuosity and style. His father noticed his inclination while yet a boy to rhythm and accordingly put him in percussion.

Place of birth	:	Karaikudi
Original name	:	Ganapathy Subramaniam [condensed into Mani with place attached.]
Training in music/percussion under	:	Father trained him in vocal music. Karaikudi Rangu Ayyangar disciple of Muthu Ayyar in percussion Training at the Talavadya Vidyalaya of Harihara Sarma, Vinayak Ram's father along with Vinayak Ram to the mutual benefit of both.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Institution founded	:	Sruti Laya Seva Trust in 1980
Magazine published	:	*Layamani Layam*

Attempts to have Palghat Mani Ayyar as *guru* failed in spite of the recommendation of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar who lived opposite to Mani's house. Ayyangar's greatness was not understood by Mani as he was too young then. The musical father exposed him to music wherever it could be got. Initially Mani provided percussion for about four years to *bhajans* and *harikathas* and was remunerated with a rupee and two annas then [roughly equivalent to about forty rupees now]. During the training at the Tala Vadya Vidyalaya, Mani and Vinayak Ram would deeply probe into the intricacies of time-honoured *tīrmanams, kōrvais,* etc. to find out how they could be bettered. In 1973, Sri Surajananda came into his life and predicted a bright future to Mani and wanted to learn mridangam from the latter. Mani came under his spell and remains so till date though the preceptor is no more. In fact, he celebrates the life of Sri Surajananda with concerts, etc annually.

Mani has been experimenting with various ensembles and styles doing permutation and combination of different percussive instruments, both Indian and Western, for orchestration. **He is averse to the so-called honours since most of them go to canvassers and the like, merit counting little.**

***

Krishnapuram K.V.R.S. Mani – Kanjira artiste:[b. July 13, 1945]
K.V. Gopalakrishnan – Mridangist: [b. February 18, 1977]

Kanjira, as a concert percussion instrument, came into prominence during the time of Pudukottai Dakshinamurti Pillai. It is now a fading art due to many causes, which are mentioned in earlier volumes. Mani, one among the present kanjira artistes now practising, is son of K. V. Krishnan and Narayani Ammal and got training under Tiruvenkadattiah of Madurai, Chittoor K. Shyamsundar and the famous Sankarasivam of Ramanathapuram. He has been providing accompaniment to leading artistes on All India Radio and outside since 1973.

His son, K.V.Gopalakrishnan is a mridangist trained by Kuttalam Viswanatha Ayyar and Dr. T.K.Murti. He has distinguished himself in competitions and is providing able accompaniment with competence. He is a B. High grade artiste with All India Radio.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Palghat Mani Ayyar – Percussion maestro: [June, 12, 1912 – May 29, 1981]

Hailed as an all-time great trend-setter and a legend in his own time, Mani Ayyar was hailed as 'the gentle perfect knight' and continues to be the favourite symbol of immaculate perfection and excellence in eloquent *laya*. His dislike of the mike at concerts was born out of his intense love of the original, uncorrupted, chaste *nāda*. Long back for sound adjustments at concerts, it is stated that it was not unusual for the violinist to sit a few feet away from the vocalist and the percussionist at some greater distance to ensure acoustics. Once Mani Ayyar took change of seating arrangements as an insult to his dignity and vehemently protested. The famous tabla player Ahmedjan Thirakwa sat spellbound at one of the concerts hearing Mani Ayyar's percussive brilliance and told V.K. Narayana Menon at the end, 'If I were not 84, I would have taken my tabla and sat with him!'

Narayana Menon, an authority with profound experience, said on June 6,1988:

> 'The instrument seemed to be an extension of the man, or was it a case of man being an extension of the instrument? The fact is that the instrument seemed a part of the performer's being, which means perfection of technique – effortless, natural, subtle in touch. Mani Ayyar had told me much later in life that the old man [Dakshinamurti Pillai] did teach him and open his eyes to many fine points of accompaniment. The relationship of the young genius and the mature maestro was touching. Mani Ayyar had established a very special relationship between melody and rhythm and in his hands, the **mridangam sang**. The mridangam underlined the phrasing, the stresses, the tempo and the *sāhitya*... Even the pauses were eloquent.
>
> 'One has to hear him **sing *pallavi***. It is an intellectual experience. He was one of the rare masters of rhythm, of *tāla*, because he enriched and brought in new dimensions to his play. .Johann Sebastian Bach, it is said, would take a piece of music of his own which is already perfect and transform it into a miracle . There are few musicians who could achieve such heights. Palghat Mani Ayyar was one such.'

❋❋❋

T.P. Mani Ayyar – Vocalist: [b. 1931]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvananthapuram [Kerala]
Parents	:	R. Padmanabha Bhagavatar [flautist, one among the old Trivandrum Brothers & Court musicians at Trivandrum and Mysore] and Janaki Ammmal

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Training in music	:	Initially with father Ganabhushanam Course at Swati Tirunal Academy, Trivandrum in 1951
Debut	:	Trichur temple in 1954
Post held	:	Principal, RLV College, Tirupunittura [retired in 1986.]
Honours	:	Honoured by Sri Sadguru Tyagaraja Bhakta Sabha, Trivandrum in 1999

Mani Ayyar hails from a musical family and has given many performances on All India Radio since 1956 and elsewhere. Is B.High grade artiste. Enjoys a sweet voice and his rendition reflects perfect *sruti suddham.* Grand father Ramaswamy Bhagavatar was also a court vidwan.

***

Meera Nathan – Vocalist-Teacher: [b. February 21, 1949]

Meera Nathan inherited the musical legacy of her grandfather and mother Rama Hariharan who had given concerts for All India Radio. She learnt music under S.Ramachandran, who had his own training in music under a distinguished galaxy of gurus, presumably at the Madras College of Carnatic Music. Meera Nathan has won many prizes in competitions and is a 'A' grade artiste with All India Radio. She has been giving concerts all over India and abroad. She enjoys a facile voice and brings out the finer classical nuances at her concerts. Has firm grip over *kālapramāna* and her chaste rendition is remarkable. She got scholarship from the Government of India for advanced studies in music. Was on the faculty of the Sangita Vidyalaya of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangita Sabha, Mumbai for over two decades.

Place of birth	:	Vile Parle, Mumbai
Parents	:	N. Hariharan and Rama Hariharan
Debut	:	At the Music Academy, Chennai in 1975
Concert tours abroad	:	Sri Lanka, U.S.A.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar – A Towering Musical Soul: [1877-1945]

A Garland presents a life account of the eminent Muthiah Bhagavatar, a multi-sided vidwan who walked across the southern states in splenderous majesty and warmth of reception and who commanded respect from vidwans and royalty alike. He was initially a vocalist and then turned *harikatha kālakṣēpa* artiste, *guru,* composer and codifier of Swati Tirunal Maharajah's songs. He has left a legacy of his immense musical treasure in all the southern states. **S. Rajam observed** during a lecture-demonstration on his compositions:

'Bhagavatar's compositions excel in impressive aesthetic grandeur, which are as rich in melody and enjoyable as his costumes exuded fragrance. Selective fragrance announced in advance his presence or arrival. He had a penchant for rare *rāgas Sri Saravana* in *rāga Sumanapriya* [with the *chittaswara* supplied by Madurai Seshagopalan], *Sikki vahana* in *Hamsa Dīpikam* and *Rājarājeswari* in *Garudadhwani* are very interesting compositions. He infused life into several *rāgas* like *Hamsānandi, Mōhana kalyāni* [with his *kṛiti Bhuvanēshwariya* and *Siddhivināyakam*], *Gauda Malhar* and *Valaji* [*Kṛiti Jalandhara*]. The *rāgas* were then languishing. His stay in Benares for mental peace in 1928 exposed him to the lure of hindustani music [as it had done with Muthuswami Dikṣitar and Subramania Bharati]. *Rāga Sohini* was adapted and there emerged *Hamsānandi* and the *kriti Nidumahima.* Bhagavatar was a cultured artiste of grace, talents, attainments and contribution.'

***

Muthuswamy Dikṣitar – Architect of *Rāga* forms: [March 24, 1776 – April 26, 1835]

A Melodic memorial in *Guruguhānjali*: Eminent men leave behind a band of devoted, dedicated, passionate followers, admirers and disciples to carry on their mission and message. Muthuswami Diksitar of the Classical Carnatic Trinity was not blest with such an eloquent band since he was mostly a *kṣētrajña* [and a rolling stone, however venerable it be, gathers little mass]. His delectable compositions were mostly confined to and were the preserve of the elite till a few decades back. Even Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati while extolling the merits of the songs had said that as they are in sanskrit, popularity could not be generated. There were a few additions to the concert *menu* now and then but much of his scholarly, melodic songs were out of bounds to most of the musicians as *gurus* mostly did not know many of them and *siṣyas* learnt not many as they were not taught. It

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

was a vicious circle and this very lack of knowledge of and expertise in his *kritis* had threatened to become a negative heritage in spite of the creditable work of **Subbarama Dikṣitar, T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar, Ambhi Dikṣitar and Kallidaikurichi Sundaram Ayyar!**

It is a virtue of Nature to present a redeemer as and when circumstances warrant. That saviour came in the person of **Dr. V.V. Srivatsa**, who is dynamism personified and enjoys profound and lucid scholarship in languages, expertise in music and a will born of conviction inspired by a passionate love of the *kṛitis* of Dikṣitar to achieve results. He stepped in with a plan to give concrete content and acceleration to the spread of Diksitar *kṛitis*. ***Guruguhānjali*** is the institution he has founded assisted by a qualified team of select enthusiastic musicians. Dikṣitar assumed 'Guruguha' as his *mudra* presumably influenced by the circumstances leading to his birth [born of prayers to the Lord at Vaideeswarankoil] and the later advent of his – rather debut - at Tiruttani as well as his birth star being Krittika. *Guruguhānjali* is thus a dedicatory musical edifice raised to the memory of the great composer, scholar and *vainika-gāyaka.*

Incentives and facilities to learn and propagate the *kṛitis* through special concerts, cassettes and demonstrations are offered at considerable, productive costs and labour conceived, planned and executed with much penetrative thought and research-oriented study. 438 songs have been brought out at concerts up to 1998. And it continues. What is the appeal of *Guruguhānjali*? It is couched in words of eloquent grace and grandeur on the model of the song *Rāgasudhā rasa, panamu jesi* (*Andōlika*) of Tyagaraja:

'We send our invitations. You are someone special to us.
Our expectations of reciprocity are limited to your benign presence at our concerts.
We seek no sponsorship or any other type of patronage.
Pray come and drink deep the nectar of Dikṣitar's songs and be blessed.'

What more can anyone do? *Guruguhānjali* cajoles, beckons and takes us to the *Dikṣita Saṅgita Sāgara* [Reservoir of Diksitar *Kṛitis*] at no cost. One has merely to go and enjoy. Upaniṣad Bṛhmam of Kanchi did the same in the nineteenth century [*Vide A Garland.*] The learned doctor circulates enlightening brochures not for mere entertainment but to educate and elevate the level of *rasikas*. Below is a specimen extract:

Swānubhavi	[one who sings or plays for self-satisfaction]
Anukara	[strict follower of a school or *gharana*]
Rañjaka	[one whose presentation gives ephemeral satisfaction] and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bhāvuka	[one whose music stirs up the souls of listeners. [Tyagaraja called himself a *bhāvuka*.]
Pashana	[unresponsive]
Bakula	[responsive but with ulterior motives]
Sahaja	[simple unassuming] and
Āstika	[learned and interested]

Another profound statement of Dr. Srivatsa is worthy of reproduction here:

'Our research has shown that the hyper-linkage between Venkatamakhin's *Mēḷakarta* Scheme and Muthuswami Dikṣitar's prolific output is exaggerated. **The maximum number of Dikṣitar *kṛitis* are in *bhāṣāṅga rāgas* [177] where audio-aesthetic satisfaction is at a premium – as against 151 in *mēḷakarta rāgas* and 95 in *upāṅga rāgas*.'**

It may perhaps be stated here that the tendency for the 'hyper-linkage' could be due to the efforts of Subbarama Dikṣitar to present the Venkatamakhin formula to the public through his work and the family's partiality for it.

Dr. V. V. Srivatsa, a *bhāvuka* or an *āstika* or both?

Guruguhānjali is by, of, and for *rasikas,* to strive, to seek, to find and never to yield an organization. Dr Srivatsa, the brain, soul and motive force behind it, is a man of deep penetration, conviction and productive action who knows to plan, execute and deliver goods. His devotion and dedication to Dikṣitar are massive magnificent, unexcelled and unique. The institution with an ambitious laudable goal is surely one with a difference. Prosperity, it deserves and success should crown its endeavours.

It is known that the Classical Carnatic Trinity were all born within a span of fourteen years in adjacent streets of Tiruvarur, the holy place where the supreme upholder of *dharmic* justice, Manu Neeti Cholan ruled. His ethical dispensation of justice found reflection in the ethical songs of the Trinity. The house in which the Rama *bhakta* was born was in bad shape while that in which the Devi *upāsaka* Syama Sastri was born was in fair condition. Dikṣitar's house needed maintenance. The eminent Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar, Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi and her spouse T.Sadasivam purchased the houses and entrusted them to a committee blessed by the Paramacharya of Kanchi which renovated and maintains them now for devotees and admirers to pay their respects. Singapore Govindaswamy constructed

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

a beautiful auditorium in Dikṣitar's house. Annual festival is also organised on a grand scale. Musicians and music-lovers may pay a visit during their travels and elevate their noble musical inclinations.

The eminent C.R.Srinivasa Ayyangar, a scholar of vast parts wrote in the *Hindu* dated May 25, 1922 on the most well-known invocatory song of Dikṣitar thus:

> "*Vātāpiganapatim* is the most misused, mishandled and misapplied song. But who knows or who cares to know what that curious name, Vatapi Ganapati, implies. Does it not smell of that curious *asura*, Ilvala! Then there ought to be an Ilvala Ganapati too! What has that strange and wayward Vatapi, that treacherous host, to do with the first born of Mahadeva? I was blissfully ignorant of the allusion for long years and it was only after I came across an obscure passage in one of the bye-*purāṇās*, the mystery cleared.
>
> "Agastya, when he found Vatapi was in his stomach ready to break out at the call of his brother, passed his hands over his stomach and with his soul fully concentrated in prayer on Sri Maha Ganapati, Lord of Muladhara Cakra, said softly, 'Vatapi, my dear; be thou digested'. That aspect of Ganesa which granted the boon to the Leveller of the Vindhyas [Agastya] was named thereafter 'Vatapi Ganapati', in grateful memory of His blessing to end the life of the treacherous slayer of innocent guests."

***

R. Nagaraja – Mridangist: [b. August 22, 1960]

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Parentage	:	Grandfather Bhairavi Lakshminarayanappa was Palace vidwan, Mysore. Father Ganabhushana Raja Rao was a vainika of merit.
Training under	:	Bangalore A.Rajachar

R. Nagaraja has been providing accompaniment to well-known artistes. The book in kannada titled *Kṛiti Male* – Musical compositions of his father Raja Rao - was released on March 29, 1999. The young vidwan looks ahead for a bright future.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Dr. K. Omanakutty [Amma] – Pedagogue: [b. May 24, 1943]

Parentage	:	Malabar Gopalan Nair, vocalist and harmonist & Kamalakshi Amma, performing artiste.
Qualification	:	Master of Arts [Music]
Musical training	:	Gana Praveena Ph. D. from Kerala University on the thesis 'Relation between the musical and literary aspects in Kathakali'
Posts held	:	Professor & Head of Department of Music, University of Kerala. [Has been teaching for 33 years.] Was connected with many of the University's committees, boards, etc. Formerly Member, Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy
Honours & titles	:	Agastian Joseph Award from ADCA Association Nada Ratna from Mararkshema Sabha Akashvani Award, 1990 Golden Jubilee Award from SST Sangeetha Sabha Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Academy Award, 1997 Tulaseevanam Praskaram, 1993 Madras Music Academy Award for Senior Performing Artistes, 1996-97.
Publications	:	*Swati Madhuri* – 2 volumes *Navagraha Kṛitis of Dikṣitar* – Commenary *Rāgamudras in Dikṣitar Kṛitis* [Research work] *Sangeetha Śāstram.* Many more are on anvil

Dr. Omanakutty is a restless musical soul with vast experience in teaching, research and authorship. She is the only top grade woman artiste from Kerala with All India Radio and Doordarshan. Her studentship synchroniszed with the faculty being manned by a galaxy of Carnatic musicians like Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar and G.N. Balasubramaniam. She was the recipient of scholarship from Sangita Nataka Akademy for research in kathakali music and a fellowship for hindustani music from the Government of India. Has presented a number of promising disciples. Quite a versatile musical personality.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

M. Padmanabha Ayyar – Vainika/Teacher: [September 1903 - February 3, 1963]

A musically talented family with successive generations devoting themselves heart and soul to the fragrant fine art. Music has been a tradition and family asset. Kozhikodu Ramaswamy Bhagavatar's son, Padmanabha Bhagavatar [popularly known as Pappukutti Bhagavatar], was a specialist in *Āttapāttu,* a form of stage music for kathakali. His music was much appreciated by Maharaja Ayilyam Tirunal, Thiruvananthapuram. His son, Mahadeva Bhagavatar had his training in veena under his uncle, Subramanya alias Subbiah Bhagavatar and the palace vidwan and relative, Chattu Bhagavatar. Mahadeva Bhagavatar was a teacher in music in Government School, Suchindram.

Padmanabha Ayyar was the son of this Mahadeva Bhagavatar and Rukmini. He drank the milk of music copiously available at home from childhood. Concurrent with scholastic studies, he underwent training in vocal and veena from his father. He had training in violin also under a local violinist. In 1925, he shifted from Suchindram in Kanyakumari district to Trivandrum then a native state, took to giving tuitions and presenting stage performances and later took up a clerical job in 1927 initially in the Education Department and later got transferred in 1945 to the Travancore Broadcasting Station, which was later taken over by All India Radio. He had special training under the distinguished T. Lakshmana Pillai He found himself in his element till retirement in 1958.

He was giving solo veena and violin accompaniment at concerts. Teaching was his favourite occupation and many had the benefit of it as Trivandrum was virgin soil for accentuated musical endeavours then. Padmanabha Ayyar got the gold medal as prize for professional 'short' concerts held in 1930. He was participating in musical activities which were remarkably many. He was on the Board of Examiners for examinations in music, acted as judge and presented papers. He practically **died in harness as he fell unconscious while teaching and expired soon.** Was very active in the sphere of music.

Had composed two *swarajatis* in *rāgas Katanakutūhalam* and *Mayāmālavagaula* and a *varna* in *rāga Saraswati.* His book, co-authored by his father, and titled *Sangita Chandrika* in malayalam [1937] is a boon to beginners and the public. His second book 'Violin and its Techniques' remains unpublished.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

P. Padmanabha Sarma – Composer, Vainika & Bhagavata: [b. December 26, 1927]

Place of birth	:	Aruvichakkarai. Kanyakumari district.
Parents	:	Trivandrum Parameswara Bhagavatar, vainika & Sitalakshmi Ammal
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Science
Training in vocal music & veena	:	Father Suchindram Padmanabha Bhagavatar, grandfather Lakshmi Ammal, eldest sister
Occupation	:	Schoolmaster, Lecturer and later Professor of Mathematics, Scott Christian College, Nagercoil
Debut – Veena concert	:	At Karamanai, Trivandrum in 1940 on the occasion of the 'At Home' to Dewan Sri C.P. Ramaswami Iyer and others

We have seen in earlier *Garlands* that from the days of Plato, mathematics and music are consanguineous comrades and it proves true in this case too. Padmanabha Sarma was giving concerts from the erstwhile Travancore Radio Station, which later became All India Radio as well as at other forums. Sarma highlights two of his performances in particular, viz.,

> The one in 1946 at Aranmula in Central Travancore: Veena concert with his father accompanied by two mridangams and two kanjiras, spanning four hours including an one hour percussion solo!
>
> And the other in 1946 at Tirunelveli with his father. Arranged by Nagercoil Ganesa Ayyar at which there was an **encore** of *Nagumōmu* [*Abheri*] at the request of the appreciating public.

[Popularity of Veena presently is in *avarōhana* without doubt. It is only the sentimental love of the instrument and its millennia old liaison with Divinity that are nurishing it still. I had suggested to the Music Academy in 1998 that **veena concerts mights be by a duo,** whether they are brothers, sisters or *guru* and *siṣya* and if there is none at least a stranger should sit with a veena and tuning it. That presents a melodic charm, a winning lure that could arrest the cascading downward trend.]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The vainika had to switch over to vocal and *bhajan* necessitated by rigidity of fingers. Advocate Nataraja Ayyar of Nagercoil, Sanjivi Bhagavatar of Pudukottai and Nott Annaji Rao, *pūrvāśrama* father of eminent Bhāgavata Śrēṣta Haridas Giri Swamigal inspired him in his *bhajans*. Founded the Bhakta Samajam at Nagercoil and has been conducting *bhajans*, giving discourses and *kālakṣēpams*.

Padmanabha Sarma has composed about a hundred comprising *varṇams, kīrtanas, tillānas* and *rāgamālikas* and has published the book *Sankīrtana Kadambam*. Was honoured by the Kanchi Acharya with a gold pendent.

***

Padma Rajagopalan – Vocalist-Dancer: [b.1941]

Place of birth	:	Udumalpet near Coimbatore
Parents	:	Ramaswami Ayyar and Chinnammal
Musical training under	:	Initially father Sengottai Krishnamurti Bhagavatar Madurai N. Krishnan
Training in dance	:	Initially father. Then Pudukottai Dhanammal

A musical family which included violinist T.K. Jayarama Ayyar, flautist T.K. Balaganesa Ayyar, violinists Kovai Dakshinamurti and Gnanambal, besides the father, provided the melodic and artistic environment from the cradle. Padma Rajagopalan had her dance *araṅgēṭṛam* [debut] in 1949 and was giving dance performances at many centres for over a decade.

She joined Natyalaya of the renowned Vaijayantimala Bali in 1962 to provide teaching in both dance and music, i.e., to act as *naṭṭuvanār* under the supervision of Madurai N. Krishnan. Her sweet voice, profound knowledge in the twin arts and expertise in dance teaching helped to shape her into a *naṭṭuvanār* of merit and her music added to the virtue and grade of performances. In 1970 she switched over to the famous Bharatalaya of Sudharani Raghupathy in which *guru* N. Krishnan is a director. Providing music for *bharatanāṭya*, etc. calls for specialized techniques, capability, melodic voice, felicitous *sanchāras*, kite-flying but regulated *manōdharma* and consistent, immaculate *laya suddham* – control of time-measure - since synchronization of *tāla* of the percussionist, rendition of the musician and the steps and *adavus* of the dancer should all ensure perfect,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

accurate synchronized harmony. Padma has been able to ensure these with accuracy and perfection. Has visited with the troupe of Sudharani Raghupati U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Malaysia, Singapore, etc. Has provided music to the dances of other celebrities and given concerts.

❋❋❋

Pattammal Ganapathy [Nagpur] – Musician/Teacher: [b. May 29, 1929]

Place of birth	:	Kumbakonam
Parents	:	T.M. Panchapakesa Ayyar & Kasi Ammal
Concert tour	:	East Africa
Qualification in Hindustani music	:	Sangit Visharad [violin] from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya

Kumbakonam till recently was the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu brimming with the flow of classical music. Every village around it too hummed with the celestial music of veterans who have left a legacy at once rich and imperishable. Born in such an environment along with musical members of a family, Pattammal got her initiation under Ramu Ayyangar, disciple of Sambandam Pillai, a disciple of the celebrated Rajmanickam Pillai. She was fully trained in vocal and violin. Brother Sabhesan of Pune was a flautist and she got trained in flute too under him. She had been giving concerts on All India Radio, Nagpur and elsewhere and had provided violin accompaniment to top musicians. During the last two decades, she has been coaching a number of musical aspirants at Nagpur and her home has become a centre of diverse musical activities. 'For Carnatic music, seek Pattammal in Nagpur' is a fact known for long. She was an ardent admirer and follower of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar.

❋❋❋

Parassala B. Ponnammal –Vocalist and Pedagogue: [b. November 29, 1924]

Parents	:	R. Mahadeva Ayyar & Bhagavati Ammal
General qualification	:	Underwent Sastry course in sanskrit

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Musical training	:	Passed Ganabhushanam diploma at Sri Swati Tirunal College of Music, Trivandrum when titans were at the helm of its faculty.
Debut	:	At Parassala in 1938.Got a gold medal from Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar.
Posts held	:	Professor at the same college upto 1970 Principal, R.L.V. College of Music and Fine Arts, Tirupunitura during 1970-1980

Ponnammal has been giving normal and special [theme-based] concerts at many centres both in India and Sri Lanka as well as on All India Radio and Doordarshan as an 'A' grade artiste. Has been the recipient of varied laurels.

Honours

Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Award for Best Musician	1977
Golden Jubilee Award from Sri Swati Tirunal Sangita Sabha, Trivandrum	1992
Gayaka Ratnam from the same sabha	1996
Sangita Ratnam from Sruti Bharati, Tiruchur	1997
Sangita Sudharnava from Pudukode Krishnamurti Foundation	1997

***

Dr. Sripada Pinakapani – Eminent Vocalist & Guru: [b. August 3, 1913]

'If music has therepeutic values, a surgeon and post-graduate in medicine is the best qualified person to be a musician. Dr. S. Pinakapani is an eminent musician and a civil surgeon who dissects not only human anatomy but also the intricate vistas of Carnatic Music with distinction', reads *A Garland.*

Parentage	:	Sripada Kameswara Rao & Jayamma, S.
Qualification	:	M.D.
Post held	:	Professor of Medicine, Government Medical College, Kurnool & retired in 1968

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Training in music under	:	Mysore B.S. Lakshmana Rao from 1924. Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, Violin wizard R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar, vainika - musicologist.
Publications	:	*Saṅgita Sourabham* – 4 volumes - telugu *Pallavi Gāna Sudha* – telugu and english *Manōdharma saṅgitam* – telugu *Manōdharma saṅgitam* – tamil *Annamāchāryārin kīrtanaṅgal* *Rāju Pātalu* – telugu
Honours	:	Sangita Natak Academy, A.P. Award 1966 Ganakala Prapurna Sangit Kala Sikhamani 1970 Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi Award 1977 Sangita Kalanidhi from Music Academy 1983 Padma Bhushan from President of India 1984 Astana Vidwan, TTD Devasthanams

'*Music of Sripāda Pinākini*' is an album of 14 cassettes with eighty-five compositions. Father was a Junior Professor of Education in the Government Training College, Rajahmundry. B.S. Lakshman Rao was not a professional musician but was a teacher in the Government Model High School in which Pinakapani was a pupil. Even as a boy the latter was shrewd in assimilating musical wisdom and would step in to correct his sister committing mistakes. Lakshman Rao gave him such a sound grounding in *laya* and *swara* that Pinakapani would resort to guide and correct other boys even at school. He drew encomium from distinguished artistes and connoisseurs even in his early days when he had coparcenary both with medicine and music. In 1930, he heard for the first time treatment of *neraval, etc.,* of Musiri Subramanya Ayyar at Madras with a wealth of *saṇgatis* and was profoundly inspired by his music. In 1970 after getting the coveted title of Sangita Kalanidhi from Music Academy, Pinakapani sang the piece *Paranjyoti needu* which he heard forty years back from Musiri himself and drew the laudatory '*besh, besh*' from the same titan sitting before him in the auditorium. His first recital on All India Radio was in October 1938 which unfortunately synchronised with the forthcoming final examinations of M.B.B.S. However to escape the wrath of the examiner, he sang at the Station under the name of Vasant.

Dr. Pinakapani is among those stalwarts whom music sabhas and institutions chose to sideline continuously and consistenly and he had fewer chances to sing than he was eligible for. In connection with some maestros similarly placed, I had mentioned that they sat more in the auditorium than on the dais. The case of Dr. Pinakapani was not much different though fully recognised in fits and starts, off and on with titles. Even when he was invested

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

with the title of Sangita Kalanidhi, he got the chance to sing only because M.D. Ramanathan scheduled to sing fell ill and Pinakapani was asked to ascend the stage as a stepney! It is indeed a distressing fact that chances have eluded many a great musical soul and there is no chance of such a flaw being remedied in this material world of pulls and counter-pulls. A prominent vainika from Andhra who was Chief Producer of Music, All India Radio, Delhi for many years would not invite Pinakapani to sing in the National Programme though Pinakapani was in the Central Audition Board and when ultimately he was offered a chance in 1972, the Chief Producer felt hurt when the belated invitation was declined – naturally in the circumstances! Voleti Venkateshwarulu expressed his anguish that his *guru* Pinakapani had not been placed on the top grade by All India Radio. He got the grade only after he became a Padma Bhushan in 1984! And Pinakapani himself gave vent to his anguish stating,

> 'My disappointment is that I was neglected by the music sabhas of the Tamil country, the heartland of that very Tanjore style that I cultivated and which I wanted to bring into Andhra...'

Has composed *tāna varṇas* in *rakti rāgas*. Disciples included the distinguished Voleti Venkateswarulu and Sangita Kalanidhi Nedunuri Krishnamurti.

***

Pithukuli Murugadas : *Bhāgavata* [b. July 1918]

A mere congregation of devotees at the holy place of Vidurashwa near Mysore was enough to sharpen the pseudo vigilance of British goons in pre-Independence days and treat them as freedom-fighters. They enacted a mini Jalianwalabagh resulting in two deaths. In protest, Pithukuli Murugadas led an agitating contingent. He was arrested and sent to prison to serve a term of six months! Fortunately the wedding of Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, the Mysore ruler presented an occasion for an amnesty and Murugadas stepped out of prison. He might have mused *Śiraicālai enna seyyum* [what can the prison do?] Murugadas has brought in a fresh approach to singing devotional pieces with his calculated polished voice, adoption of catchy tunes as well as taking the best from other areas in the field of *bhajans*. Harmonium well suited to *bhajans* has been his constant companion. One could easily recognize him in a crowd from his sartorial novelty wedded to simplicity. This saffron-clad freedom-fighter-cum-*bhāgavata* had helped good causes and has been spreading *bhakti* through his winsome *bhajans*. He has been honoured with the Award of the Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi too. Vide *Another Garland* page 198 for more details.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Mavelikara R. Prabhakara Varma –Vocalist/Pedagogue: [b. October 29,1928]

Parents	:	K.RamaVarma-Chandraprabha Amma Tampuran
Qualification	:	Ganabhushanam from Sri Swati Tirunal College of Music, Trivandrum Master of Arts [Music]
Teaching experience	:	Professor of Music, Sri Swati Tirunal College of Music & R.L.V. College of Music, Tirupunitura since 1957 Principal, R.L.V. College 1984 Visiting Professor of Vocal Music, Sri Venkateswara Temple, Pittsburg, U.S.A. 1988-89 Principal, Chitra Tirunal College of Music, Trivandram Professor, Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kaladi

A life profoundly concerned with teaching theory and practice of music at various institutions studded with music concerts as a 'A' grade artiste with All India Radio and Doordarshan, distinguish the career of Prabhakara Varma. He has set compositions of Tulaseevanam to tunes. A musical soul with rich and varied interests in Public Bodies like Encyclopaedia Publications, Board of Studies in Music, Universities of Calicut, Delhi, etc., he was also Chairman for Government Music Examinations, Selection Panels and Audition Board.

Honours	:	Tulaseevanam Award	1983
		Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Award	1985
		Astana Vidwan, Pittsburg temple	1996
		Ganakala Visharad, Travancore Dewaswom Board	1996
		Saṅgita Pūrṇa Sree by J.S.Parishad, Cochin	1997

❋❋❋

Dr. Prapancham Sitaram – Flautist: [b. 1942]

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Father and *guru*	:	Prapancham Krishnamurti of the Delhi University

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Academic qualification	:	Master of Arts [Literature] Diploma in Music from Andhra University Passed examination in Western Music
Training & guidance in music from	:	Dr. Balamurali Krishna Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao Annavarapu Ramaswamy T.R. Mahalingam [Flute Mali]
Debut	:	At the age of eight. Obtained the Vicitra Vina prize from All India Radio at the age of 15.
Post held	:	Was with All India Radio. Professor/Head of the Department of Music & Fine Arts, Padmavati Devi Women's University, Tirupati
Foreign tours	:	Burma, Thailand, Laos, U.S.S.R, U.S.A. Europe, Mangolia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philipines, Sri Lanka, etc.,
Honours	:	Venugana Dureena Venunada Pravina Astana Vidwan, Tirumalai Tirupati Devastanams Kalaimamani from T.N. Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram State insignia by the King of Laos.

Prapancham Sitaram, a creative, versatile well-known flautist, has been having a hectic artistic life ever on the move in and out of India presenting concerts. He has had the gift of training under great masters and a sound background. His long innings with All India Radio has helped him much not only in exposing him to varied styles and approaches but in providing scope for Vadya Vrinda compositions and easy contact with the best in the field. His rendition is sweet and melodious and his repertoire is well spanned. He has also coached many including many foreign students. He has been accompanied by great violinists and percussionists in his concerts. Has cassettes and L.P. discs to his credit.

***

Prema Doraiswamy – Vocalist:

Parents	:	A.S.K.Ayyangar & Komalavalli, a musician
Academic qualification	:	Graduate in music of the Gandharva Vidyalaya

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Musical training under	:	Gopal Rao, a disciple of Veenai Krishnmachariar Dr. Balamurali Krishna Vairamangalam Lakshminarayana
Concert tours	:	Kualalumpur, Singapore, etc.
Honours	:	Sangita Jyoti from Agricultural University, Rishikesh Honoured by the Maharajah of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar after a palace concert.

Prema Doraiswamy has given hundreds of concerts, enjoys a huge repertoire and is a conventional *vidushi.*

❋❋❋

Sangita Pitamaha Purandaradasa – *Sangita* ignored but *Sāhitya* accepted! [1484 – 1564]

The great composer legated, according to his version in song *Vāsudēva nāmaraliya,* which has been accepted by authorities all along, a magnificent number of 4,75,000 songs pregnant with pure *sāhitya* of divine content brimming with *bhakti,* beauty of lyric, prosodical finesse and felicity of expression. Of course much of it had been lost. For details of his life, please refer to *A Garland* [pages 212 –214] and *Another garland* [pages 62-67]. It is a fact that the general presumption is that the *sangita* [*rāgas*] for most of the available songs too had been lost in the course of centuries and that the songs are sung according to the taste and inclination, whims and fancies of individual musicians. This may result in downgrading the greatest personality in Classical Carnatic music from the pedastal of the most eminent *vāggēyakāra.* The proximate reason for the loss of the tunes was that Vijayanagar Empire was sacked and it vanished in 1565 and Hampi where the great bard lived was ransacked by plundering, marauding hordes ruthlessly. Dwarakanath of the *Hindu* [in the issue dated June 19, 1998] has dealt with this aspect of *sangita* of the available songs collectively hailed as *Purandarōpaniṣad.*

When Hampi was ruined a year after the death of Pithamaha, his sons left for their native Purandaragad presumably carrying with them the precious musical asset. They wrote down the texts in marathi script which were brought to Mysore two centuries later and written in kannada script. Naturally they were bare texts since notation was not in vogue. Unlike Tyagaraja, Purandara had not that wealth of disciples as he was a wandering

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

mystic like Muthuswami Dikṣitar. The general presumption is that the tunes he endowed each song with naturally had died out in due course. Apart from his sons, a few others too should have learnt some songs from him or his sons in the course of their peregrinations. In some temples like Udippi and a few families some songs were being sung regularly. A reasonable presumption should be that tunes for such songs, though not for all, have survived in some places. Notation came on the scene only in 19th century.

Karigiri Rao, a great musician of the 19th century, in a great effort collected and wrote down to notation many of Purandara songs as was in vogue then which should be original. His notings are available as well of others in the direction. Only thirty-five simple and *rakti rāgas* have been used. It could be presumed that the songs carried the original tunes in which Purandara had himself sung. The Purandara Fourth [Death] Centenary, Humpi in 1964 brought out a hundred songs with notation.

Dwarakanath regrets, 'This monumental work has been practically ignored by musicians. They create their own modern *rāgas* [tunes] according to their own fancies. A close study reveals the absurdity as the *rāgas* and their *rasas* bear no relation to the moods of the *sāhitya* of the songs while those indicated by Karigiri Rao sound quite natural' [Kalavardhini Cassettes have brought out cassettes adopting the tunes indicated by the Centenary Committee.]

This is a matter for close introspection. It is unfair to rob the *sāhitya* for use and discard the *saṅgita* adopted by the great composer. The University, the Music Academy, Saraswati Vāggēyakāra Trust and Music Colleges may help in reorientating the approach.

***

104326

M. G. Radhakrishnan – Music Composer: [b. July 29, 1940]

Qualification	:	Bacherlor of Arts Ganabhushanam from Swati Tirunal Music Academy, Tiruvanantapuram
Post held	:	Senior Music Composer, All India Radio

Radhakrishnan has been staff artist with All India Radio for the last thirty-six years with rich experience as music director for film, drama, etc. songs and has composed music in quite a large number of cases. 'A' grade artiste in Carnatic music, he was conferred with the title of Nadaratna by All Kerala Kshetrakalapeetham, beides many awards.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Radha Ramji – Vocalist: [b. September 23, 1952]

Place of birth	:	Mayiladuthurai in Thanjavur district
Parents	:	K.N. Raghavan and Amba
Training in music at	:	The Central College of Carnatic Music, Chennai. Secured Sangita Vidwan and Training diplomas.
Advanced training under	:	Sangita Kalanidhi T.K. Govinda Rao

Radha Ramji had a decade-long sojourn in Muscat where she was musically active giving concerts and celebrating Tyagaraja Aradhana. Since her return she has commenced giving concerts at different forums in Chennai and elsewhere. She has a keen sense of rhythm and an appealing voice. She had assisted her *guru* T.K. Govinda Rao in his works *Varṇamanjari* and *Compositions of Sri Tyagaraja*. The musically talented artiste who had the privilege of learning under four Sangita Kalanidhis in the College in her impressionable years can positively look ahead for a prosperous musical career as she has resumed her favourite art in her homeland.

***

K. Raghava Warrier – Flautist: [February, 1914]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvananthapuram [As Europe started witnessing guns booming to commence the First World War which was to last till 1918, a musical person was born on the east coast of Bharat!]
Parents	:	Krisna Warrier & Janaki Warrier
General Qualification	:	Kerala E.S.L.C.
Training in music under	:	N.P. Padmanabha Bhagavatar, grandson of Palakad Parmeswara Bhagavatar [1933-38]
Employment in	:	Kerala Department of Tourism
Concert tour abroad	:	Singapore

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Raghava Warrier has given many concerts and has a number of disciples including the famous K. S. Gopalakrishnan. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar utilised the services of Warrier and his *guru* for publishing the songs of Swati Tirunal Maharajah.

***

K. Rajachar – Mridanga Vidwan: [b. September 23, 1923]

Born at	:	Ballapurpet, Bangalore
Father	:	A Srinivasachar, a tabala artiste
Honours	:	Honoured by Sri Tyagaraja Gana Sabha, Abhiruchi Gana Sabha, & Gayana Samaja.

Winding up his scholastic studies in 1934, he equipped himself well in sanskrit and *vaikanasa, āgama śāstras*. Took to mridangam from April 18, 1944 under the enlightened mridanga vidwan M.L. Veerabhadriah. He has been providing accompaniment to many artistes and more particularly to Vainika L Raja Rao. Has coached disciples.

***

Shencottah S. Rajagopala Iyer –Mridangist: [1906-1947]

Place of birth	:	Shenkottah, a place made memorable by the advent of top dramatist on tamil stage, S.G. Kittappa.
Parentage	:	Seetharama Swamigal, harikatha artiste & Venkitalakshmi
Training in mridangam	:	Initially under father Pudukottai Dakshinamurti Pillai, eminent percussionist of lavish fame
Debut	:	At the famous Suchindram Temple Festival, 1918 accompanying his father's *kālakṣēpa* performance.
Concert tour	:	Sri Lanka and Singapore accompanying super star dramatist, S.G. Kittappa

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Rajagopala Iyer made Trivandrum his permanent home from 1931 and had spent some years with Trivandrum Mullamood Bhagavatar group. He has accompanied titans of yester decades. His technical artisry was widely acclaimed. His son Rajappa is a mridangist.

❋❋❋

Rajalakshmi Tirunarayanan –Veena Artiste :

A prominent torch-bearer of the renowned Mysore *bani* of veena play, Rajalakshmi Tirunarayanan is a respected figure in classical music circles in Karnataka.

Parents	:	G.R.Josyer Mafres & Mysore Singarammal
Training under	:	Vina Venkatagiriappa, eminent Astana Vidwan, Mysore Palace Prof. R.N. Doraiswamy, University of Mysore Lalgudi Jayaraman Prof. T.N.Krishnan
Debut	:	While young in the presence of the Maharaja of Mysore
Post held	:	Head of Department of Performing Arts, Bangalore University.
Publications	:	*Vāggēyakāra Vaibhava* *Veena Dhanammal* *Gāna Śāstra* [Theory]
Honours	:	Kala Jyoti from Nadajyoti Tyagarajaswamy Bhajana Sabha, Bangalore Honoured by the Bangalore Gayana Sabha in 1997 Gana Kala Bhushana by Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat, [1999]
Concert tours	:	Middle East, Nepal

Rajalakshmi Tirunarayanan has been giving veena concerts on All India Radio as 'A' grade artiste and Doordarshan as well as in sabhas, etc. for the last four decades. Has presented lec-dems and many papers. Heads many groups of enthusiastic ensembles. She is a popular artiste.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

S. Rajam – A multi-faceted Musical Soul : [b. February 10,1919]

This ancient nation has presented successive waves of distinguished men in different paths of life adding to its imperishable glory. Some are recognized while alive and many only after their lives. The resplendent field of *saṅgita* has been no exception. Among the galaxy we presently see, there is one, quite simple in personal life, with highly laudable *vidwat* of vast parts, a top musician who gives his opinion without camouflage on men and matters, a *guru* of stature, a genial, humane friend, a hero in the very second film in the thirties and above all a qualified, recognized, applauded painter of deep penetration and high renown. Of course, there were in days past Bhadrachala Ramadasa, Vanamamalai Azhagappa Ayyangar and Pallavi Doraiswami Ayyar. But gentleman Rajam has presented such a himalayan output of the finest paintings and drawings to the musical world that they stand inscribed indelibly in the impressionable minds of connoisseurs and lay. He reigns and rules supreme in the twin fields of classical Carnatic music and painting. If Tyagaraja or any other *vāggēyakāra* were to present himself before a polling authority even with his identity card, he would not be allowed to vote if his personality does not accord with the widely-known image of his as presented by our gentleman-painter! Thus he is, in effect, Bṛhma II. He is the virtuous authority on Kotiswara Ayyar compositions. He is a living legend in proof of the tamil adage, *'Niṛai kudam talumbādu'* [potful water spills not]! This, in brief, is a brief descriptive tribute to the genial soul who is familiarly seen shrouded in humility.

This good person is Sangita Kalacharya S. Rajam. He has done yeoman service in the allied fields of music and painting. Rajam deserves more, much more than what he has been accorded with.

***

Rajamanickam Pillai, the *Dharma patni* maestro: [August 8, 1898 – 1970]

Calm and unruffled, affable and polite, violin maestro Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai adorned the concert dais with dignity and merit for nearly five decades and a half. He firmly believed, as a distinguished accompanist to the galaxy of vocalists of his days, in what could be termed as the *dharmapatni* or the eagle and its shadow style. He remained steadfast to this mode as an illustrious and a much sought-after accompanist–

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

providing cooperative accompaniment with understanding to ensure the success of concerts without hoisting and flagging off his own independent *mārga* and style,

restricting his violin role to a half of the principal's *rāga* or *swara prastāra* [delineation] without the slightest ambition to dominate even youngsters; and

providing a calm, serene decorum, free from tension, egoism or mannerism.

A perfect *sampradāya vidwan* of fabulous popularity, he was a benevolent *guru*, a versatile, convivial gentleman and a stalwart among soloists and accompanists. His disciples, Govindaraja Pillai, Sikkil Bhaskaran, M.N.Dandapani Desikhar and others have all distinguished themselves. The birth centenary of the maestro was celebrated at many centres of the country. The stamp of culture marked his style of living, deportment, speech and every segment of his life. God-fearing, he was punctilious in his daily prayers. He enjoyed subtle humour.

One day a charming girl from a nearby house ran upto his house and asked him whether she could exhibit her musical skill! When he readily agreed, she sang which was unfortunately not tolerably acceptable. The enterprising girl wanted the certificate of approval of the quality of her rendition from the great maestro

'How is my rendition, uncle?'

'Why have doubts, dear? It is quite good. But where did you learn it?

'It is all only your blessings, uncle!' Confiding so, the kangaroo jumped out and vanished.

'Should my *aseervādam* [blessing] result in such poor music, O Lord!', the smiling maestro, in turn, confided to his disciple, K.P.Nilamani.

This indicates his geniality and kindness to the aspiring young.

Bhaskaran recapitulates the suggestive method of teaching of Pillai. There would be a three-month observation first. The *sapta swaras* would be practised intensively to ensure *swara suddham*. Then soft *gamakas* [wave-like vibrations] presented with subtlety, called *nir asaivu, akara sādhakam* [voice modulation with vowel emphasis and elongation] in the seven *swaras*, practice of *tāla* measures, etc. *Sāhitya* was sacred. He would also advise,

'Saṅgitattudan iṅgitamum vēṇḍum!'
[Music should march hand-in-hand with discernment and sagacity].

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Curb tendency to exhaust all your *sañgatis* and other musical embellishments when you accompany others. The vocalist has voice constraints, blemishes and difficulties; fill up gaps left by him and bring out the best features of his rendition and embellish them to achieve the goal, i.e., success of the concert and not of your individual play.

'Function like a chaste wife [*dharma patni*]!

'Respect hosts and organizers as they face difficulties in arranging concerts.

'My guru Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar's style [*bāni*] lifted me up. Assimilate good in other artistes.

'Ensure *sāhitya suddham* – lyrical purity and authenticity – even though you play only instrument.'

Rajamanickam Pillai followed the straight *sarva laghu* and had little faith in permutations and computations in *swara* manipulations. Harmonious melody, traditional presentation, *śāntam* and *soukhyam* in music were his basic ideals. He had an eye for special merit among youth. Thus when he saw T.N. Seshagopalan singing in a *bhajan*, he advised that he be sent to Sankara Sivam and Seshagopalan is now at the top. Though a top artiste, he was not averse to step in when Chowdiah could not reach the concert venue and later to vacate the same on the latter's arrival! He is the only musician to get an elephant and donate it to *a* temple [*Sri Ādi Kumbhēswar* temple, Kumbakonam]. *Vide A Garland* [pages 222-223] for a fuller life.

***

Kumbakonam Rajappa Ayyar-Mridangist- Stalwart *Guru:* [b. 1916]

A senior percussionist, who shaped the fortunes of scores of youngsters, who dominate the percussive spheres now or are assured of their future artistic stature, is Kumbakonam Rajappa Ayyar. One of the old veterans, he had his training under the celebrated stalwarts Azhaganambi Pillai and Sakkottai Rangu Ayyangar. During his performing career, he had provided accompaniment to maestros. His genius lay more on the teaching side and he founded a school some five decades back.

Rajappa Ayyar is a born, self-effacing teacher and his inclinations and intuitive tendencies look out for aspiring young to shape their destinies in the field of percussion. Thus he is sculptor in the field of rhythm, a nattuvanar in perfecting fingering, its touch and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

beats, its caressig *gumkas* and threatening *tīrmānams*. Scores of percussionists owe their artistry to him. He is a Drona in the field of percussion and takes delight in bringing up percussive Arjunas.

Honours	:	Laya Vadya Kovida from Balasubramanya Sangita Sabha TTK Memorial Certificate of Merit & Award from the Music Academy in 1987 Maharajapuram Viswnatha Iyer Trust Award Sundaraja Memorial Trust honours. Sangita Seva Nirata from Tyagaraja Sangita Vidwat Samajam, Chennai 'Nadakkanal' from Nadakkanal, Chennai D.K.J.Memorial Award in 2000 C.E. from the D.K.J. Foundation, Chennai

❋❋❋

L. Raja Rao–Vainika: [Mysore Vina Brothers] [March 26, 1908-November 28, 1979]

Place of birth	:	Mysore
Father and *Guru*	:	Bhairavi Lakshminaranappa, Vainika and Astana Vidwan, Mysore Palace
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Science
Posts held	:	Reader and Head of Department of Music, APS College, Bangalore.
Books published	:	*Saṅgita Śāstra Sāra* *Saṅgita Śāstra Candrike* *Bhāratiya Saṅgita Vādyagalu*

Hailing from a family of musicians, Raja Rao grew up with veena from cradle and was encouraged by stalwarts like Veena Seshanna and by the Maharaja of Mysore in formative years. Had given a large number of concerts with his brother L. Gopala Rao, both popularly known as the Mysore Vina Brothers. Many stations of All India Radio have broadcast their concerts. He had trained and brought up a number of disciples like Ratnagiri Subba Sastri, Varsha Venugopal,Anantaramiah and his daughter Veena. Has given recordings with his brother.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bhāva saṅgita: T.N. Rajarathinam Pillai: [August 27, 1898 -December 12, 1956]

[**Nagaswaram**, otherwise called *Maṅgala vādya* meaning an auspicious musical instrument, has been the most popular instrument extensively in use since it was taken as vital to services in temples, auspicious occasions in villages, towns and at homes like weddings. There used to be no procession without it. Nagaswara artistes literally poured forth chaste classical music for hours in far-flung villages and towns to the artistic delight and enjoyment of, and elevation of spirits among, the public – connoisseur or lay. Sweet rendition with nagaswara would waft in the midnight stillness for miles around spreading *śāntam, soukhyam* and *maṅgalam* and no wonder people became music crazy. The instrument is meant for, and its play is at its best only, in open air. Music recitals with nagaswaram naturally was thus free for all to enjoy. The artistes were *de facto* custodians of classical Carnatic Music for hundreds of years and by hereditary practice, inherited legacy and proficiency in profession. Nagaswara became the property, possession and monopoly of **Isai Velalar** caste. The name of the caste itself is a beautiful creation as it means that the caste husbands [cultivates, nurtures and harvests] music! And they have attended to it with uninhibited, unswerving sincerity and discharged the commitment and trust as a duty with absolute devotion and dedication and promoted the art to celestial heights. Surely but for them, and more particularly the advent of classical titans among them now and then, the classical art might have decayed long back. **In due recognition, the *Garlands* have highlighted the lives of many of them.]**

The advent of nagaswara maestro and wizard of all times, T.N. Rajarathinam Pillai was a water-shed in the annals of instrumental music and his is the most well-known name. In fact, it became a common name quite soon after his advent to connote excellence in art. The period witnessed the advent of a galaxy of nagaswara mestros. The name Rajarathinam, meaning King of Precious Stones, was thoughtfully given to him by Tirumarugal Natesa Pillai [1874-1903] when he adopted young Balasubramanyam in 1902. When Natesa Pillai died, the hand of destiny led Rajarathinam, his mother and sister to Ponnu Pillai at Tiruvaduthurai, the seat of a saivite math, which is to give him scope for training, name and fame! Initially Rajarathinam gave some vocal performances [like Tavil Panchami] with his sister till he got trained in nagaswaram under Kannuswamy Pillai of Ammapettai. *Vide* earlier volumes for fuller details. Rajarathinam became a colourful legend early in his life, which spurred many to spin out incidents and anecdotes *ad infinitum*. Here are some accepted episodes:

'Tirukkodikkaval Krisna Ayyar, giant of a violinist, during tuition sessions taught me *Bēgada varṇa*. One day he asked me to render it in the presence of ten visitors. As I was

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

handling the phrase *pa, da, ni, da, pa* in plain notes, rather without *rāga bhāva*, I felt the master's bow heavily on my nose. [A blow with the master's bow that has perpetuated his music!]. Blood came oozing out. I asked him,

'What wrong have I committed?'

'I taught you how to bring out the *rāga bhāva* of *Bēgada* conspicuously. It is totally absent in your rendition! This is not the way to learn.'

I apologized for my remissness.'

[Source: *Layamani Layam* of Karaikudi Mani]

So averred the nagaswara wizard of all-time fame in an interview to All India Radio on October 10, 1955. [Was not such a rigid, strict discipline the cause for the huge glut of musical stalwarts coming up in scores in past decades? There was admittedly an abundance of vidwans. Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore Chowdiah, who had received the worst of treatment from his *guru*, aptly said that due to the glut in Tamil Nadu many great men did not know where the next meal would come from!] Rajarathinam Pillai was blest with a fine personality and was a shining star among *vidwans*. He made *rāga bhāva of Tōdi, Sāvēri, Chndrajyōti, Shanmugapriyā, Natabhairavi* and *Sahāna* dance with his delectable inspired rendition which was unexcelled as a class by itself for all times. There is no instrument better suited to bring out exquisite *rāga bhāva* in all its florid excellence and technical brilliance than nagaswara and in the hands of stalwarts, it was indeed supreme, divine, *non pareil*. If Tiruvizhimilalai Brothers excelled in *kṛiti* rendition, Rajarathinam made *raga* delineation his own. Few could challenge his style and melodic charm of alluring sweetness. No wonder eminent Justice A.S.Panchapakesa Ayyar, I.C.S. was perked to remark that any day he would prefer to listen to TNR's music for an hour or two instead of listening to nonsense in the court the whole day!

'Once Ayyar [Tirukkodikaval maestro] had finished his tuition of the *kṛiti Giripai nela* [*Sahāna*] and laid down his violin. I, then aged nine, started to delineate the *rāga suo motu* [presumably egged on by a surging, impatient inner urge which was to burst out and blossom forth quite soon]. He said with anger, "I have not taught it yet; how can you make bold to indulge in *rāga ālāpana*? Well proceed, let me see whether you do it properly." I went on with keen anxiety. As soon as I finished, the overwhelmed *guru* exclaimed, 'Excellent, you require no more tuitions; you are graduated! You are now fit to appear before the mutt head for further prospects.'

That was the prodigy in the making. He had also the benefit of multi-pronged training under stalwarts like Konerirajapurm Vaidyanatha Ayyar in *rāga ālāpana, pallavi* styles,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

etc. and Markanda nagaswarakarar and the experience of playing along with the maestros of the time. The profound sense of gratitude ingrained in his character is reflected in what he said on the occasion of his being honoured first: 'I do not view the Raştrapati Award as **my** achievement. The honour truly belongs to those who truly had a great share in **my elevation** in the field of art like Tiruvaduthurai Ambalavana Desikhar and the unique Tirukkodikaval Kṛṣṇa Ayyar, my *guru.*'

Humility has been a cultivated or congenital virtue with the people of this land. Is there any record of those who built the scores of temples, architectural, sculptural, etc. marvels which constitute the pride, privilege and glory of this ancient but living nation. He is said to have taken great care in choosing the *seevali* [the *ad hoc* blow-pipe] and the length of the instrument. The centenary of his birth is being deservedly celebrated with enthusiasm.

Personal Life:

He loved music and was, in truth, music itself, no doubt. He loved two more, viz., drinks [he was a true and model addict] and positive partiality for women. He married five women but unfortunately none conceived! He loved the company and presence of women, perhaps natural in the circumstance! It is a matter for guess which of three, music, drinks or women, he loved less. It would appear that none would accuse him of any partiality or indiscretion in this as he had missed concerts and allegedly held the instrument upside down once in a sabha in the thirties at Chennai due to addiction. Addiction to drinks and women, are consanguineous twins, listed out from ancient times among the five sins, difficult to discard and divorce. Pillai was steadfast in his love of all the three to the last. Music was God's gift which he could not dispossess but the other two were his own acquisitions due to early rise to stardom, prosperity, excessive praise and publicity while young. Nay, these very special 'virtues' gave him added publicity!

Self respect or Egoism? –Misplaced Appreciation!

There have been oft-repeated laudatory remarks regarding his insisting on mobile platforms being provided for him and his team by temples to play during festival processions, strangely attributing it to his keen sense of **"Self Respect".** Perhaps this calls for some introspection. During processions of idols along main streets, gods and goddesses like Sri Devi, Sri Subramanya and His Consorts stand [of course, as icons]. And they stand all

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the while from end to end! The *Vêda gōṣti* treks and stands behind the deities. The *Tēvāram gōṣti* [team] stands singing all the while. VIPs including the highest stand. The entire crowd of devotees stand. Great *āchāryas* follow processions standing and offering worship. Are they all lacking in that rare commodity which is hailed now as self-respect? Renowned nagaswara artistes have all been standing during processions till this day. Some of them were Sangita Kalanidhis and were really worthy of that title. Were they all lacking in their self respect? Even in marriage processions, none sits except the bridal couple and a few children! Yesterday's couple are today's parents or parents-in-law who are necessarily standing – not offered mobile seats during marriage processions. If the trend of **interpretation of 'self-respect'** is accepted, dancers, traffic constables, eminent doctors [including Dr. Rangachari who **has been standing** for decades for the welfare of the suffering public as a statue at the entrance to the General Hospital, Chennai near Central Station] and attendant staff during operations, legal celebrities arguing out cases in courts, air hostesses during flights and such others are all to be seated! The whole world is to be left seated! In what respect are they lesser mortals? Rajarathinam was indeed a great vidwan but should absurdities too be hailed? Blemishes, as in the case of Flautist Mali, cost him the title of Sangita Kalanidhi and Presidential titles. They loved his music without doubt but regretted their inability to digest or countenance the other side of their personal conduct and character! There is a film song that has relevance to this strange coparcenary: *"Unnai ṣolli kuṟṟamillai, Ennai ṣolli kuṟṟamillai, Kālam ṣeida kōlamaḍi, Kaḍavul ṣeida kuṟṟamaḍi."* [No use of blaming you or me; it is misadventure of Fate and the error of God.] He was indeed by every account marvellous in music, a historic artiste; but unfortunately lagged behind in certain values. Pride, ego, arrogance, women and drink screened him off in personal life! One has to take into account the times he lived in and the values that governed men and matters and were valued! [Drink perhaps gave the kick and women the needed emotions and vital inspiration! There is a layman's belief that genius shines only if such basic blemishes in conduct and character are present significantly!] Ganges water is holy, pure and great to be lauded; but let us not laud the gutter water too that is let into it from cities.

❋❋❋

Rajeswari Menon –Vocalist and Vainika: [b. October 23, 1924]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvananthapuram, Kerala
Parents	:	Judge Rama Kurup & Rukmini Rama Kurup
Academic qualification	:	Bachelor of Science [Zoology]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Training in music under	:	Sthanu Bhagavatar [in vocal music] : M.A. Kalyanakrishna Bhagavatar & his father, M.K. Anantakrishna Bhagavatar [in veena]
Debut	:	At the age of nine at V.J.T. Hall, Tiruvananthapuram at the reception to Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar.
Honours	:	Vainika Jyoti from Yoga Vedanta Forest University, Rishikesh Kerala Sangita Nataka Academi Award for Vainikas in 1933
Posts held	:	Member, Advisory Committee, Swati Tirunal College Music and Kerala State Jawahar Bala Bhavan, etc.

Rajeswari Menon has grown with music from childhood and in college she got the first prizes and gold medals. She has been giving concerts in vocal music and veena on All India Radio, Doordarshan and at other forums. Compositions of Swati Tirunal Maharajah have a special fascination for her. She has given jugalbandi programme and lecture-demonstrations. Plays jalatarangam too. A life fully devoted to and involved in the beauty and rhythm of Classical Carnatic music.

***

A.V. Ramaswamy Ayyangar – *Bhāgavata*: [b. April 5, 1925]

Place of birth	:	Tuticorin, famous for the patriotic advent of floating the first Swadeshi Ship by Kappalotti V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, a magnificent patriot.
Parents	:	A.V. Vannamalachariar & Sesha Ammal, a musician
General education	:	Kerala State E.S.L.C.
Training in music	:	Harmonium Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Pudukottai Gopalakrishna Bhagavatar, an eminent *bhāgavata śrēṣṭa* from 1942 to 196
Founded & made his debut at	:	Jai Sitaram Bhajan Mandali, Trivandrum [1948].
Honours	:	Bhagavata Tilakam at Bhagavata Sammelan [1998]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The Bhajan Mandali carries on devotional work without remuneration presenting weekly programmes on All India Radio, Trivandrum and at many other centres regularly. Ayyangar presents special themes like Sita Kalyanam and Radha Kalyanam also. In an era of *bhajans* being seen at its lowest ebb and in *avarōhana*, a handful eminent *bhāgavatas* like Ayyangar continue to hold aloft the torch and present *nāma saṅkīrtana* with the prayer *Sarvē janā sukhinō bhavantu – Ellōrum inburṟirukka* vēndum - for universal happiness. [One can see this prayer for universal happiness at every function and festival in Hindu fold. What could be secularism if this is not?] *Bhajan* is a democractic congregational exercise with devotional music and percussion led by *bhāgavatas* well trained in devotional music. *Bhajan* is one activity which is absolutely above 'self'. They sing and dance for the welfare of the universe! No wonder, Lord Krisna proclaimed in that he lives in the hearts of *bhāgavatas*!. What is the lesson of His declaration?' Become a *Bhāgavata* and secure Him in your heart!

❋❋❋

Cochin N.P. Ramaswamy – Vocalist: [b. August 21, 1031]

Place of birth	:	Cochin
Parentage	:	N.R.P. Ayyar, a musical soul and singer and N.P.Lakshmi Ammal, great grand daughter of famed Palghat Parameswara Bhagavatar, Chief Samastana Vidwan, Swati Tirunal Maharajah's Court.
Qualification and occupation	:	M. Sc. – Medical Assistant 1954-1991
Training in music	:	Naturally his father. There has been a legacy of musical wealth in the family.
Debut	:	Kumara Shanti Celebrations, Cochin at his age of fourteen.
Compositions	:	*Kṛitis* and *tillānas* – to be published.
Honours	:	Sangita Ratna in 1988 at Palghat Has been honoured by the Acharyas of Sringeri, Kanchi-Kamakoti and Avani Sringeri maths.

Ramaswamy has inherited the musical legacy of Palghat Parameswara Bhāgavatar and Palghat Mahadeva Bhāgavatar, violinist, composer and sometime *guru* to Papanasam Śivan. Noorani Parameswara Bhāgavatar, another celebrity, was maternal grandfather.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

There was *saṅgamam* of musical eminence. He has been giving numerous concerts on All India Radio [55 years of concert broadcasts] and elsewhere and is 'A' grade vidwan. Has given cassettes. Perhaps the learned vidwan can delve deep into hidden secrets of musical therapy for the benefit of humanity. He enjoys a vast repertoire.

***

B.N. Ramesh – Mridangist: [b.April 13, 1949]

Place of birth	:	Bangalore
Father	:	B. Nilakantan, Chief Engineer [retired]. [Brother late B.N. Suresh was a flautist.]
Qualification /occupation	:	B.Sc [Hons], M.Sc., - Marketing Business Executive.
Training in percussion	:	Bangalore Rangappa Kalaratna Bangalore K. Venkataram

Business takes him to many parts of the world and Ramesh carries his inseparable percussion instrument, mridangam. Has accompanied many senior artists with ability. Surely this art-based digression should equip him well in his business endeavours well and *vice versa.* After all, if art has not yet become entirely a business, is not business an art?

***

Kadakavur Ratnakaran Bhagavatar – Vocalist: [b.May, 19, 1930]

Place of birth	:	Nilakkamukku, Trivandrum district
Parentage	:	Sitarama Bhāgavatar and Lakshmikutti Amma, both musical souls. Uncle Kochukrishnan Asan and brother Madhavankutty Asan are reputed musicians.
Training in music	:	At home under his father and brother, KadakkavurRanganatha Bhāgavatar, Madurai Kesava Bhāgavatar
Debut	:	Sang as duo with brother at the age of 16 . Solo vocal at Sivagiri Math in 1948

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Posts held	:	Composer, All India Radio & retired in 1990 Member, Board of Examiners, Kerala & Audition Committee, All India Radio.
Compositions, etc.	:	*Bahudāri rāga varṇam.* Tuned hundreds of songs for All India Radio.
Honours	:	Award from Sivagiri Math in 1948 M. K. Sukumaran Memorial Award and the title, Sangita Acharya in 1990 Gayaka Ratnam from S.T.Sangita Sabha in 1997.

Ratnakaran Bhagavatar has trained a host of disciples and presents *saṅgita sēva* at his house every Friday for the benefit of music-lovers. There is something really interesting in his career. He came at the age of 22 to Travancore as ivory carving artiste but continued his musical training under Kesava Bhgagavatar, joined the Music Academy there and soon took to the post of tambura tuning assistant in All India Radio concurrently. Self-reliance and self-education have played a great part in self-promotion in the field of art!

❋❋❋

Revathy Krishnan– Vainika artiste [Tillaisthanam legacy] [b. July 29, 1956]

The Grand Musical Tyagaraja Reservoir of Tiruvaiyaru had many rivers and rivulets taking off carrying its musically rich waters to spread the fragrance and beauty of his immaculately composed songs of eternal appeal. The prime musical rivers of fame, talent, devotion, dedication and *guru bhakti* that took off were the Tillaisthanam, Umayalpuram and Wallajahpet clans. It is a matter for conjecture what would have happened to the juicy songs of wisdom, had these disciple lines not been attached to him by divine will. But for Lord Vinayaka, what would have Vyasa done with his mentally conceived *Mahābhārata?* These disciples were not only Boswells to their Johnson, Tyagaraja, but were men of immense musical equipment and expertise. But they chose to subordinate their genius, aspirations and self-promotion to the greater soul that inspired and conquered them and that was their *guru* Tyagaraja. Did not Ramaswamy Sivan subordinate his urges to promote the more or equally talented younger brother, the great Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar of eternal fame? Actually he lent voice support! And how gracefully that titan, the only Maha in the musical hierarchy, stood by his elder like Bharata to his elder? Purity of mind flushes out egos, prejudices, jealousies and animosities. Rajamanickam Pillai sat on the dais to lend violin support when Chowdiah had not arrived on time and when Chowdiah was sighted,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

he got down yielding his place to his colleague with ease and magnnimity. These are the souls whom the Lord of Dwaraka called *anasuya*. These are lessons to humanity but for which life would not be worth living. Well, where is the need to resurrect these thoughts here, however noble they be, one may wonder. When one thinks of someone or something, he is apt necessarily to ponder over his ancestry and its eminence. Even so, when Revathy Krishna's life came to be covered, I could not resist some diversion. Now about her life devoted to playing the veena which with the flute has enjoyed celebrity from the days of the *Vēdas* that was not the privilege of any other instrument, Indian or foreign.

Parentage	:	Great grand daughter of Tillaisthanam Rama Ayyangar, disciple of Tyagaraja; grand daughter of Srinivasa Raghavan [Cheema], musician and critic Daughter of Dr. Selvakumar who played flute and Lakshmi, who played violin and taught Revathy too.
Place of birth	:	Madras
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts
Musical training under	:	Madurai Sundaram Ayyar, Sadguru Sangita Vidyalaya. Sangita Kalanidhi K.P. Sivanandam Pillai and Saradha Sivanandham – the veena spouses. Veena Kalpakam Swaminathan Padmasri Lalgudi Jayaraman & Sangita Vidwan diploma from Tamil Nadu Goernment Music College, Chennai
Debut	:	Madurai in 1972 at Sri Rama Navami Festival
Honours	:	Gottuvadyam Narayana Ayyangar Award 1994
	:	'Veena Gana Pravina' by Vinayaka Sath Sangh, Chennai
		Obul Reddy Veena Award by Narada Gana Sabha 1997
		Veena Dhanammal Memorial Award 1998
		Kalaimamani by T.N. Government 1998

Revathy Krishna hailing from a family of erudite musicians [*saṅgita parampara*] has been trained both in vocal and veena and is a veena artiste by option. She has been giving veena concerts in and out of Chennai since 1990. Is 'A' grade artiste. Her play is sweet, soft, caressing and mellowed without that heavy Big Ben chiming type of fingering. There is cultured presentation of musical appeal that is soothing and satisfying. She coaxes out of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Panini Kanya Maha Vidyalaya Collection.

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the instrument *gamakas* and other graces effortlessly. She is blest with a good smiling countenance which is indeed a must for veena artistes many of whom, because of handling an ancient instrument of lavish heritage and reverence, not infrequently forget to smile. [Actually I made the humble suggestion to the Music Academy that the veena artistes presented could be advised to smile softly [not laugh!] during the play, say, like mandolin Srinivas or Soumya, whether there is any need to smile or not and reciprocated or not.] Has given cassettes.

Revathy Krishna has been enhancing her repertoire and constant practice has equipped her play with melodic fragrance and finesse. There is jewelled crispness in *ālāpana* and *swara* renditon, 'a thus much and not more' as practised by the great Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar. Veena play relies on ardent artistes like her!

***

S. Rugmani Gopalakrishnan – Veena Artiste:

[b. August 24, 1936]

Place of birth	:	Tirunelveli
Parentage	:	P.V. Srinivasa Ayyar and Lakshmi Ammal Enjoys high musical legacy being the grand daughter of Gayakha Sikhamani L. Muthiah Bhagavatar and niece of Principal Nellai T.V.Krishnamurti
Musical training	:	Gana Bhushanam in Veena from SST College Advanced training with Government of India Cultural Scholarship under maestro, K.S. Narayanaswamy.
Posts held	:	Professor & head of Department, SST' College of Music during 1957-1986 Principal, Chembai Mermorial Government College of Music upto July 1990 Member, Board of Studies, & Audition Panel All India Radio.

'A' grade vidwan, Rugmani has been giving numerous concerts at all important venues in addition to her teaching. A traditional *vidushi,* she follows the style of her mentor, Padma Bhushan K.S. Narayanaswamy.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Sarabha Sastri- Flute Prodigy of vast parts: [1872 – 1904]

The annual *Ārādhana* of Sri Tyagaraja commences with the flute play of the Bard's delectable song *Chetulara* [*Bhairavi*] which is brimful of *vātsalya bhāva* of *bhakti.* Or could it not be *śṛiṅgāra bhāva* with Rama as the *nāyaki?* Why not? It is in such fields the poet revels! Tyagaraja runs riot in his imaginative, endearing adoration of Rama treating himself as an endearing mother and Rama as a child. Sings he:

'I shall adorn and decorate You in such a manner that Indira, Brhma and others would be struck with Thy beauty and shower praises on You. I shall adorn You wih golden ankle chain, laced silk clothes, put on fascinating flowers and give [what?] - **a kiss** too. Besides, I shall…' ; so he goes on like a fond mother of the Thanjavur Belt lavishing her boundless love on her first child born after much penance and prayers at long last on the eve of menopause!

There seems some propriety in choosing this song, which was once in *raga Karaharapriya* but is sung in *rāga Bhairavi.* Here is some idea of endearing love to young Rama and it is but proper that the festivity, which is but *śrāddha* done with *śraddha,* commences with this song. Sarabha Sastri was a scholarly flautist enjoying bright, glowing inner vision who commanded respect. He prescribed this song and procedure.

A Garland carries a full account of his illustrious life which is worth a perusal. Sarabha Sastri was *ēka santha grāhi,* i.e., one who could grasp and assimilate anything on first hearing itself as mentioned therein. Here is an episode mentioned by scholar C.R. Srinivasa Ayyangar in the *Hindu* [September 4, 1923]. Once Sarabha was at Madras for a concert. The famous violinist Singaracharyar met Sarabha and mentioned that he got the piece *Korisevimpa* [*Karaharapriya*] accurately by chance. It was then not in the repertoire of Sarabha. "I whispered to him [Sarabha], 'Now is your chance. Appropriate it' and he asked Acharyar to sing it once and he sang it with a lot of apparent pride and pleasure in his very best and scientific style 'full of twists and turns, ambushes and pitfalls, surprises and starts! Heaven knows what time it should have taken the singer to catch and bridle it all.' Sastri listened to it! 'His senses were all indrawn into the sense of hearing and that was in-drawn in mind focus and upon the sound as they flowed from the lips of Acharyar. He drew a long breath of relief and satisfaction and another of his rare and bewitching smile. 'Will you please listen to me and correct where necessary. I fear you will have to do it often.' And then wonder of wonders [but not for me] he sang the piece without a hitch, without a flaw, correctly, accurately with no shadow of a false note from the beginning to the end. The words were in telugu and were sung back with that grace and beauty of intonation that made the purist Andhra [Acharyar] swear that Sarabha was born and bred

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

among them. All the variations were reproduced with the twists. It was too much for Acharyar who [in exhilaration] shouted, *Are! Are!"* [what!, what!] Where did you learn it so well and infinitely better in style?" **That was Sarabha!**

***

Mārgadarśi Sesha Ayyangar – Eminent composer: [c.17th century II half]

One of the prime architects of the structure called *kṛiti* [song in Classical Carnatic field used at concerts normally, wherein *saṅgita* is dominant over *sāhitya*] and a trailblazer was Sesha Ayyangar. *Saṅgita Sampradāya Pradarśini* of Subbarama Dikṣitar gives a brief account of the life of this eminent composer. Since his works acted as a beacon light or pathfinder, he is popularly called *Mārgadarśi.* A devotee of Sri Ranganatha of Srirangam, a profound scholar in musicology and sanskrit, his compositions are mostly on his *iṣta dēvata* and a few on other deities. Only sixty songs of his are now available, gathered from scattered sources. P.P. Narayanaswamy, in his scholarly and learned article in *Saṅgeetham* [USA], mentions –

a. Three songs are listed in the index to South Indian Songs by Prof Gowri Kuppuswamy and Prof. M. Hariharan.

b. Nine songs had been included in *Gayaka Locanam* of Singaracharyulu [1902].

c. A manuscript in the Palace Library, Tiruvanantapuram carries 19 of his songs.

d. A palm leaf in the collections of the Kerala University procured from Cirakkal Palace contains 13 *kīrtanas*.

e. Ananthu Gopala Bhagavatar of Madurai presented a manuscript from his family collections which among others contains twenty-six songs of Ayyangar and these were published in 1983 by Saraswati Mahal Library of Maharaja Serfoji, Thanjavur.

f. Similarity of the style of composition has led to songs of Ayyangar being taken to the 'credit' of Swati Tirunal Maharaja erroneously e.g. *Jayasugunālaya* [*Bilahari*], *Kōśalendra Māmava* [*Madhyamāvati*] and *Yojaya Padanalinena* [*Kalyani*].

It is said that his stay at Ayodhya could be the reason for his adopting Kōśala as *mudra.* But apart from this *mudra*, there is no reference to it or any song on Ayodhya to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

substantiate the assumption. 'His style resembles that of Shahaji Maharaja who ruled over Thanjavur during 1684-1710. Muthuswami Dikṣitar, Tyagaraja and Swati Tirunal have adopted his style. Swati Tirunal has also drawn inspiration from Ayyangar's compositions in providing embellishments like *muhana prasa, antya prasa* and *antarukti.* This is mentioned by him in his treatise specifically.'

Prof. P. Sambamurti pays glowing tributes to the rich compositions of Ayyangar :

> His *kṛitis* may be likened to a spectrum through which we are able to see the lustrous forms of the *rāga.* His language is mellifluous and his *sāhitya* is rich in allusions. His lofty diction and remarkable mastery over phrases which sound bold and fresh mark him out as a trail blazer or *mārgadarśi.'*

Sesha Ayyangar's songs are prominently used in the *Ēkānta sēva pūjas* in the temple of Sri Ranganatha, Srirangam and at *bhajans*. His life and his songs had not attracted as much attention as they deserve.

***

H.K. Seshagiri Rao – Stage Harmonist: [c. 1892 – 1990]

Harmonium was found, perhaps correctly, unsuitable to Classical Carnatic music and was banned from All India Radio for many years and permanently from the concert stage too. Perur Subramania Dikṣitar cajoled the instrument providing it with cloth covering [costumes!] and brought out subtle nuances but how could a single swallow make a summer? Harmonium commands monopoly on the drama stage and in *bhajans*. The dramatic stage had presented memorable harmonists like S.G. Kasi Ayyar, Khader Batcha Sahib and H.K. Seshagiri Rao. There is positive consanguinity between harmonium and stage songs. They are happy twins and normal sweet couples. The incongruity of its presence on the concert dais is not felt there.

Seshagiri Rao hailed from Hampapura and was fortunate to enter the drama troupe of the popular veteran A. V. Varadachar to take on female roles by the age of eight. His musical fingers found ample scope to present dexterous music on harmonium during intervals. He underwent training in Carnatic music under Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore Vasudevacharya and in hindustani music under the celebrated Abdul Karim Khan. He was the *tour de force* in the musically talented group, Ratnavali Theatre of Varadachar and later of the Amateur Dramatic Association. He composed many songs which commanded popularity.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Veena Seshanna – Vainika Colossus – Magical conquest of Jalatarang: [1850-1926]

It could well be said that there has been an enduring equation of Mysore with veena and Veena Seshanna. The very mention of the word vainika or veena in Mysore belt is to invoke the colourful personality of Seshanna! Even a child will affirm this. *A Garland* carries a profile of the eminent colossus. Here is an account by B.V.K. Sastry on Seshanna's magical conquest of the rare musical instrument of cups and water, the jalatarang. It is a rare but an exemplary and perfect specimen of *veni, vidi, vici.* At Mysore, Ustad Moula Bux gave a performance on jalatarang which had never before been seen by anyone. Next day, the Maharajah asked the artiste to perform again attracted by its unique presentation of music with cups and water, at the request of Seshanna who missed the earlier recital. **Here came the personality of an artiste to exhibit of what musical metal he was made of and what a genius is and could be!** Seshanna requested the Ustad to leave behind the cups and studied the function of the cups and the mode of producing melody. Of course, he should have filled up the cups with the rejuvenating musical waters of the river Cauvery!

Next day, Seshanna suggested that he was ready to perform on jalatarang! Agreeably surprised, the Maharajah arranged for it. Seshanna proved that day of what musical metal he was made of. It was a thrilling demonstration. He trained a few others. Having hoisted the flag of success at home, he availed of the Festival at Ramanathapuram away from home whither he had been invited. There too he gave not only his accustomed vina recital but a jalatarang recital too. His expertise was availed of by the Rajah of Ramanathapuram who was pleased with the performance to train one of the young musicians of the Durbar in jalatarang. Anayampatti Subbayyar was that distinguished pioneering artiste and it is well known how the tribe has increased since then. At Mysore, B. Devendrappa and Lakshminarayanachar became versatile jalatarang artistes. Sastry observes, 'With the older guard passing away, jalatarang disappeared in Karnataka as it happened with swarabat.'

***

C.K. Shankara Narayan Rao – Vainika/ Dramatist/ Teacher: [b. November 18, 1920]

Place of birth : Nanjangud in Karnataka [a place, I remember, that manufactured popular rose *gulgandu*]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Training in music & veena	:	A.S. Chandrasekhariah, grandson and direct disciple of the stalwart Veena Seshanna, a household name in Karnataka.
Occupation & Profession	:	Initially provided veena support to *guru* at concerts, giving tuitions and acting in dramas.
Special musical endeavours	:	Set tunes to compositions crying for life [*dhatu*] and bringing to focus neglected rare *ragas*. Has composed many songs.
Book authored	:	'*Vina*' - Published by CKS Rao Felicitation Committee, Bombay 22 [1995]
Honoured by institutions, viz.,	:	Karnataka Sanga, Chembur [1986] Mysore Sangita Vidyalaya [1989] Kannada Sneha Sudha [1990] Bombay Karnataka Sangha [1994] Bangalore Gana Kala Parishat [1999]

Shankara Narayan Rao is a colourful personality full of music, drama and productive activities. An artiste with immense organizing capability, he has ever been active. In 1950, he shifted from Bangalore to Bombay to secure greater and wider access to art for aspiring musical souls and also to advance his own career. His inclination to teach took hold of him and he turned a full-time *guru* to propagate, what he calls, 'Veena Seshanna techniques of play'. [Actually he himself had realized his innate talent and aptitude for veena while young when his sister-in-law brought a veena into his family.] He has been teaching not only vocal and veena but also *Dēvarnāmas* simultaneously at several centres in Mumbai City which avails of his services to optimum. Starting at the newly founded Mysore Sangita Patasala, Mysore Association, his teaching covered other institutions like Bharatiya Music and Arts Society. He was Principal of the last institution.

Solid foundation to his aspirations came to be laid when he founded the Tarangini Academy in 1970 dedicated to music and other fine arts and got it duly registered. Musical Tarangini continues to flow to its brim with melodic floods since then not only by teaching scores of bright cultured boys and girls but with celebrations on Trinity, Seshanna, etc., bringing out souvenirs and attendant paraphernalia.

Shankara Narayan Rao has set to music the famous *Mukundamāla Stōtra*, about a hundred *Purandara Dēvarnāmas* and *suḷadis* [*rāga tālamālika*] and has also presented the unique ***Sapta Tāleśwari varṇa*** of Veena Seshanna **with seven singers, each handling a different tāla.** He has probed into the influence of the songs of Purandaradasa on Saint

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Tyagaraja. In short, he is a restless musical soul ever after exploring and identifying the unseen labyrinths and intricacies of classical music.He has been giving veena concerts on All India Radio and other forums.

From the days of *Nāṭya Śāstra*, music and dance have been close consanguineous correlates of drama. There was a spurt of dramatic activity in many parts of India in tune with the Freedom Movement as part of cultural renaissance. [*Vide* article in Part I.] As brother C.K. Nagaraja Rao was a writer and dramatist, Shankara Narayan Rao too got inducted making his debut in dramas in 1933. With brother he founded-the 'United Artists' at Bangalore in 1936 and put on board quite a number of outstanding productions till 1950. He had acted along with stalwart professionals and has a long and impressive list of dramatic activity to his credit. Was an active member of the Fine Arts section of Mysore Association in Mumbai and several others. In 1952 he produced the drama 'Home Rule' for the H.M.V. Gramaphone Company.

❋❋❋

V. Shankaranarayanan – Vocalist: [b. May 2, 1975]

General Qualification	:	B.E. [Mechanical], M.B.A.
Post held	:	Programme Developer, Complete Business Solutions [India] Ltd., Chennai
Father	:	N.V. Subramaniam, Violinist, Organizer, Patron, Thinker, Musicologist & Additional General Manager, Indian Railways [retired]
Training in music under	:	Vaigal Gnanaskandan, a prominent musician

Shankaranarayanan is a chip of a musical family with a lavish, result-oriented musical background from childhood. His enlightened father is the founder of *Saraswati* and *Saraswati Vāggēyakāra* Trusts, two names one does not usually miss in the Carnatic Classical world. No wonder even at an young age, Shankaranarayanan has acquired B.High grade with All India Radio and is giving concerts regularly at prominent sabhas, radio, etc. Graduation in mechanical engineering notwithstanding, on the concert dais he is not only not 'mechanical' but unleashes his inherited legacy, innate knowledge and expertise in the soft ware, that is *manōdharmic* classical Carnatic music, presenting soft 'solutions' to musical intricacies as well. *Manōdharma* is the fertile field for highly educated, musical youth to explore and it has been so recognized from the days of Plato, Lava and Kusa. Prosperity in the field beckons Shankaranarayanan.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

K.N. Shashikiran – Vocalist: [b. September 10, 1970]

Shashikiran is an innovative, research-oriented vocalist inheriting the rich musical legacy of his renowned grandfather, Gottuvadyam K.S. Narayana Ayyangar, his amiable father-*guru* Chitraveena Narasimhan of All India Radio and his prodigy-brother of international reputation Chitraveena Ravikiran. His sister Kiranavali too is a musician. Thus it is a Home of, and for, Melody by musicians of acknowledged reputation. Naturally as was his elder brother of repute, so is Shashikiran, a child prodigy in further proof of the saying, 'Where is need to teach children of fisherman to swim?' He was able to recognize *rāgas* at the tender age of two and a half years out of an amazing two hundred *rāgas*. He commands a rich voice and has equipped and enhanced his repertoire, knowledge and skills under T. Brinda, T. Viswanathan and Calcutta K.S. Krishnamurti. Learnt mridangam under Palghat Sundaram.

Debut	:	At the age of nine along with Kiranavali.
Concert tours	:	U.S.A., Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, etc.
Awards	:	Rani Sethulakshmi Bai Memorial Award 1990 Best Pallavi Singer Award from R.R. Sabha 1995 Best *Rāga* Exponent Award of Music Academy 1997 C.M.A.N.A. Award [U.S.A.] 1998 Bharat Nirman Excellence Award 1999
His productions CD-ROM VCD VCD	:	The Horizons of Carnatic Music *Nādānubhava:* My own Carnatic Tutor – *Nādōpāsana* Subramanya Bharati songs by Sowmya & party.
Institution connected with	:	Carnatica Archival Centre as Managing Director Srishti Carnatica P. Limited as Director.

The CD-ROM and VCDs are adroit cerebral advents of the two young musicians into the scientific age to help, propagate and enlighten the thousands of apprentices and music-lovers all over the world. In this, he claims to be the 'Brain behind the album'. He is in the good company of S. Sowmya who is claimed to be the 'Spirit behind the album'. May the enterprising endeavours of the Brain and the Sprit bear luscious fruits.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

G. Sitalakshmi – Vocalist: [b. May 15, 1942]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvanantapuram, a cultural citadel and capital of Kerala State
Parentage	:	M. Sankara Rama Ayyar & Gomati Ammal
Musical background in family	:	Aunt Chellammal , a vainika-gayaka; Sister Minakshi Ramanathan, 'A' Grade Veena artiste; Sister Subbulakshmi, 'A' Grade artiste and Staff Artist (Retired), All India Radio. Sister Balambal, Professor in Veena. Thus it has been the virtual home for music for long and a cradle of artistes.
Training in music	:	Aunt Chellammal, a disciple of the vainika, Trivanantapuram Parameswara Bhagavatar. Gana Pravina from Sri Swati Tirunal College of Music when Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, G.N. Balasubrmaniam and other titans were all on the faculty [1958-65] Special advanced training under Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar.
Debut	:	In 1960, at Valia Chalai, Triandrum
Post Held	:	Professor of Music during 1992-97 in S.S.T. College [on promotion from Assistant Professor Grade] since retired.

Sitalakshmi has given a cassette and had provided voice-support to *guru* Dr. Srinivasa Ayyar and claims that no other lady would have enjoyed that rare privilege!

***

K. Sivaramakrishna Ayyar – Flautist: [b. March 10, 1924]

Place of birth	:	Vaikom near Tiruvanantapuram
Parents	:	G. Krishna Bhagavatar & Kavery Ammal
General education	:	ESLC
Musical training under	:	Father

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Debut	:	Ellamanur temple at the age of nine.
Post held – Employed in	:	Life Insurance Corporation [since retired.] Staff Artiste 1950-54
Honours	:	Nada Chakravarti by Nupura Institute of Indian Classical Dance & Music

Sivaramakrishna Ayyar had been presenting solo concerts initially on erstwhile Travancore Broadcasting Station since 1946 and later, on All India Radio since 1950 as well as at other forums apart from joining orchestral and light music troupes. Has acted as judge for inter-university students. Plays violin too. The radio organization had helped genuine musicians since its inception in a grand way at a time when patronage from royalty and landlordism was declining fast.

***

Umayalpuram Sivaraman – Percussion maestro: [b. December 17, 1935]

Umayalpuram has not only been the cradle of music but has nurtured many a glorious veteran. Sivaraman is a percussive maestro who has a philosophy of percussion which is a commitment to him. He has made researches into the making of mridangam and has demonstrated the results. Son of a doctor of medicine, himself a graduate in law and disciple of maestros of the past, some of his views and convictions may be trend-setters such as –

'Bring *rāga-bhāva* into percussion to ensure happy blend of *rāga* and *laya*.

'Do not beat the instrument but play.

'I try to be the first *rasika* of the main artiste. As I enjoy the music, my musical output is better and the audience joins the circle of appreciating *rasikas*.

'The duty of an accompanist is to embellish the *sangatis* as and when the concert tends to be dull and jack it up with lightning musical strokes, thumping and outbursts to make the audience sit up.

'Solo percussion is only an extension of the song. Keep the tempo of the song and the lyric in mind. For instance, I open the beat with *tha, tha, tha-tha-thath, that that thom* for *Bhūlōka Vaikuntam*.to present the lyric in percussion.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Avoid presenting an overdose of anything.'

'Mridangam is the king of percussion and queen of melody! The *gumkaram* on its left side is akin to *gamakas* of the vocalist. When a korvai is played, there should be *nādam*, melody. *Kōrvais* and *moras* [rhythmic pattern indicating the close of a division] have mathematical values. They should be easy on the ear and not tend to confound the audience. You begin slow, speak slow, rise high and it should be so in mridangam play too.

❋❋❋

Somanatha – Musicologist: [c.1550 – 1609 C.E.]

One in the hierarchy of eminent musicologists and authors whose works have survived till date and had cemented the edifice of musicology as an authority, Somanatha was born near Rajahmundry, of Mudgala Suri [or Meghanatha]. He grew up into a scholar in sanskrit and a master player on yal – harp or lute. He completed the memorable work *Rāgavibhōda* on September 18, 1609. The work has 463 verses and the author had followed the great musicologist and author, Rama Matya. He has dealt with the intricacies of yaḷ, *rāga bhēda*, design of vina, *suddha* and *vikruti swaras*, *gamakas, rāgalakṣanas*, etc. He mentions 96 *mēḷas* with *vikrti swaras*. His work is treated as a summary or digest of musicology upto his time. He had authored other books like *Sōmanādhēyam*, a commentary on *mīmāmsa*, which has been translated into tamil by M.S. Ramaswami Ayyar in 1933 and by Pandit Ramachandra Sarma. in 1947. A few books like these have survived the vandalism and onslaught of invading hordes fortunately.

❋❋❋

Ayyagari Someswara Rao – Vainika: [1920 – July 14, 1973]

Place of birth	:	Logisa Agraharam, Vizianagaram district.
Training in music **[In vocal]**	:	At the College of Music, Vizianagaram -then headed by the Andhra Harikatha Pithamaha Adibatla Narayana Rao. Peri Sriramamurti then working in the College
[In veena]	:	Vasa Krishnamurti, son of Vasa Venkata Rao of the Music College. Veena Kovida from Bharati Tirtha Andhra Research University. Vainika Ratna from Andhra Saraswata Parishat.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Someswara Rao held the veena in the *oordhva* [standing] posture like Karaikudi Subbarama Ayyar. Pappu Venugopala Rao states that Someswara Rao was adept in playing in *shatkāla* [six tempos] with clarity bringing out the excellence of *rāga bhāva* and *sāhitya bhāva* most lucidly. Had performed on All India Radio and at many other centres. He is credited with developing a unique method of teaching.

***

K.M. Soundaryavalli – Composer:
[July 22, 1914 – October 8, 1994]

Father	:	Nadadoor Ammal Narasimhacharya, teacher, composer and Principal and Inspector of Schools.
Training in music under	:	Murugula Sitaramayya, nagaswara vidwan
Honours	:	Title of Kavitamani conferred by His Holiness the Paramacharya of Kanchi in 1954.

Father, a scholar in sanskrit and telugu, was a voracious writer and composer. The daughter naturally had been brought up in an environment of music, scholarly pursuits and spiritual urges. Married life was initially sad with the first six children dying soon after birth. Prayers to Sri Yoga Narasimha at Sholingar brought in a pleasant progeny of five daughters and two sons. This boon inspired her to take to composing songs as her dedicated, devoted tribute to the Lord. Songs flowed from a heart pregnant with gratitude and *bhakti* in chaste tamil as well as in telugu and sanskrit. She had received no great scholastic education. Had Muthu Tandavar and such other eminent composers any special qualification from any institution worth its name? Did Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar adorn himself with a collegiate degree? Time reaches for them to accomplish the mission they had been sent here and they do it with cerebral brilliance and fragrance. Destiny and ordained mission inspire, educate, train and invest the composer, musician, or sculptor with vision, equipment and the opportunity. In several cases they shine as teachers' teacher. It has been the same with Soundaryavalli. The throbbing heart, that had witnessed helplessly and poignantly and borne the tragedy of everyone of her first six children being snatched away from her by cruel Fate, even as everyone of her earlier babies were successively plucked away from Devaki, mother of Lord Krishna, by her cruel, self-centred brother Kamsa, found refuge in the only sanctum that is available to suffering believers and quite soon, her prayers came to be granted. The sense of gratitude turned her attention to prayers in the shape of verdant songs. Such lives have a lesson to humanity.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Soundaryavalli composed prayerful songs pregnant with celestial fire. Chaste lyric, prosodic beauty, felicity of presentation, rich spiritual and devotional content mark her songs. She had given five gramophone discs on the *slōkas* of Sri Vedanta Desikhan and two cassettes of her songs. Her compositions are:

Sri Tyāga Guru Stuti Kīrtanas on the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru in telugu with notation, Soundaryavallari [telugu songs] and Amara Soundaryam [tamil songs].

❋❋❋

S. Sowmya – A charming Versatile Vocalist: [b. April 16, 1969]

Place of birth	:	Delhi
Father	:	Dr. M. Srinivasan, a musical soul & Padma
General qualification	:	M. Sc. [Chemistry] – Is an IIT Blue M.A. [Music] – gold medalist
Training in music under	:	Father Dr. S. Ramanathan T. Muktha
Debut		
Concert tours	:	USA., Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Honkong, Singapore, Sri Lanka & Muscut.
Titles and honours.	:	Isai Peroli Sahitya Priya Yuva Kala Bharati
Institution associated with	:	Carnatica Archival Centre.

A child prodigy, Sowmya is among the talented, popular artistes whose music is highly appreciated. She enjoys a pleasant melodious voice, a keen sense of the concert demands and a well-spread out repertoire. Her measured delineation of *rāgas* and *swara prastāras* and a keen sense for presenting the most delectable could be gleaned from every one of her concerts. She is innovative and comes up well-rehearsed and presents her concerts with admirable self assurance pickled with a rhythmic smile. No wonder she had been the recipient of medals and scholarships throughout her academic studies and later. She is among the top artistes presenting the largest number of concerts.

In association with Shashikiran, she has authored the pioneering CD ROM titled *Nādānubhava – The Horizon of Carnatic Music* and the VCD *Nādōpāsana – My*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

own Carnatic Tutor, besides her VCD of Subramaniya Bharati's songs. The CD ROM seeks to present in a nutshell A to Z of Classical Carnatic music such as its components, notation, melodic and rhythmic aspects, etc. and she is described as the 'Sprit behind the album'. It is claimed that she is the first Indian Classical musician to come out on video album of the kind. It is indeed a step forward from the conventional presentation of theory and song to the modern and thus Sowmya and Shashikiran are trailblazers. An A grade artiste, she has presented quite a large number of audio cassettes, etc which are popular.

***

K. S. Sreekumar – Vocalist and Pedagogue: [b. March 20, 1961]

Sreekumar obtained the diplomas Gana Bhushanam and Gana Praveen from Sri Swati Tirunal Academy of Music and his preceptors included such distinguished vidwans like Mavelikara Prabhakara Varma, Padma Bhushan K.S. Narayanaswamy, Dr. Omanakutti and Neyyantinkara Vasudevan. Is a B. High grade vidwan with All India Radio. He has been a Lecturer, Government Music College, Trivandrum for the last ten years.

***

Madurai T. Srinivasan – Mridangist: [b. 1933]

Place of birth	:	Madurai	
Training in percussion under	:	Madurai Balakrishna Ayyangar & Solavandan Sesha Ayyangar	
Debut	:	At Sri Tyagaraja Aradhana, Madurai at the age of fourteen	
Post held	:	Staff Artist, All India Radio	1975-93
Honours	:	Mozhaikalai Arasu	1973
		Laya Sudaroli	1979
		Nadakanal	1992

Madurai Srinivasan has accompanied many prominent artists, has set to music many items and also composed 19 *varṇas*, 26 *tillānas* and 35 *kīrtans* which are being documented by the institution, Sampradaya at Chennai.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

K. Srivardini – Vocalist: [b. November 17, 1925]

Parents	:	H.M. Keshavamurthy & Vasantamadhavi, a sangita vidushi of rank.
Qualification and training in music	:	Graduate Engineer Proficiency Examination in Vocal music Her mother is a distinguished musician, composer and teacher.

Srivardini is a B.High grade vocalist with All India Radio and has been giving concerts. Musical background and training enable her to alternate between music concerts and her employment at Infosys. There is much to interact between the two in modern conditions each complementing the other.

❋❋❋

S.V. Subbiah Bhagavatar – Musician/Dramatist: [I half of 20th century C.E.]

Patriot –actor S.V. Subbiah Bhagavatar took prime interest during the Freedom Movement in the Constructive Prohibition Programme of Mahatma Gandhi and was sentenced to imprisonment. Enchanting vibrant soaring voice, *manōdharmic* delineation of *rāga*, felicity of expression, ensnaring dramatic appeal enriched the music of Sambhuvar Vadagarai Subbiah Bhagavatar. He was very popular on the stage which then witnessed a galaxy of titans like S.G. Kittappa, Anantanarayana Ayyar, K.B.Sundarambal, P.S. Velu Nair, P. S. Velammal, Maharajapuram Krishnamurti and many others in the second quarter of the twentieth century. A few of his songs are in records. *Śṛiṅgāralahari* [*Nīlāmbari*] and *Kārtikeya Gāngeya* [*Todi*] among them had received wide reception and been very popular.

He had acted in the film *Nandanār* of Gopalakrishna Bharati which came to be filmed again with Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar and K.B.Sundarambal and again with Dandapani Desikar. .He had also acted in films like *Kambar* [1938] in which his *Rāgamālika*, *Jñāna Chandra* on Dasavatara in nine *rāgas* [with the names of *rāgas* like *Bhairavi, Tōdi, Vasanta, Kānada,* etc. inset in each] was a special feature. This is mentioned here to focus the fact that classical music was the staple food even in films then. The producers and directors vied with one another and provided chaste music and the viewers took delight. The vicious circle of poor music in films took hold only in later days. Light music and the present lighter music were unknown. [Fuller details on his life are not traceable.]

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi, the Bhārata Ratna:
[b. September, 16, 1916]
Sāmudri, the Institution with a promise to keep:
[b. February, 12, 1999]

When an object is held against light, it is the light that is manifested even as the object gets illumined! In the case of men and women of destiny too, it is so. Even as they get themselves illumined, the art is the main beneficiary as it gets full manifestation which it would not otherwise! The case of Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi is one such case.

The *Garlands* have highlighted the eminence of Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi who has been gracing the Classsical Carnatic music world since 1934 in a measure that is *non pareil.* She has been the first without a second having entered the galaxy no sooner than she made her memorable advent in her eighteenth year. She had sung at every forum worth its name in India and abroad. Mark Twain said, 'It is better to deserve an honour and not have it than to have it and not deserve it.' Dr Subbulakshmi not only has been conferred with all titles of worth but she has been the most eligible musician to each. Honours do get honoured when they adorn the crown of the best in the field and in all the cases concerning her, sure and certain, the titles got honoured too.

Six decades back, she sang,

> 'Eṅgum niṛai nādabṛhmamtanai nān paṇindēn vibhō!'
> [I worshipped *Nādabṛhmam* which is universally present.]

It has been worship of *Nāda* ever since. She was the first lady Carnatic artiste to be endowed with the coveted title of Sangita Kalanidhi, the highest civilian award of **Bhārat Ratna** and many more. Her music has been praised by the tallest of leaders of national and international repute and stature. She has lent grace, charm and fragrance to music in a manner rarely attained by anyone else. She has espoused all great causes and charitable institutions and extended her help lavishly. Her music has exhilarated multitudes of gatherings – *cognoscente* and lay – in India and abroad. She had adorned the spiritual, temporal, social and educational spheres with dignity and eloquence which is indeed a rare attainment. She is the one musician from the Carnatic fold whose name has conjured the vision of people in India and abroad. And with all these accomplishments, she has been the home and image of the proudest standards of humility and unpretentious wisdom of a cultured Bharatiya lady. Sarojini Naidu and Jawaharlal Nehru exhausted superlatives in lauding her profound music and image. And Gandhiji recognized her intrinsic spiritual, devotional worth clarifying that he would rather **hear her speak the prayer song *Hari tuma Haro* [October 1, 1947] than being mused by others**!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Well, there is something more! Now we recall the speech of this idol of music-lovers at the Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras two decades back:

> 'I offer my prostrations to the soul of my mother and music teacher, Smt Shanmughavadivu. To my husband [Sri T. Sadasivam], to whom I owe everything in my personal life and musical career, I dedicate this new title which is being awarded to me. I make my prostrations to revered Rajaji who looked after us with parental care and continues to do so even though invisible.* I make prostrations to the golden feet of the Walking Godhead, Kanchi Jagadguru, Sri Sankaracharya who has been protecting us every moment in our lives.'

Such a confluence of benediction from the seers of Bhārat is a rare divine gift not available to most.. The word 'invisible' too *asterisked* above gathers a significantly poignant meaning **now as all the four mentioned in the speech are no more.** In the song composed by him for Subbulakshmi, *Kuṛai onṛum illai*, Rajaji refers to the Lord,

> *Kaṇṇukku teriyāmal niṛkinṛāi, Kaṇṇā,*
> *Kaṇṇukku teriyāmal ninṛālum enakku, kuṛai onṛum illai.'*
> [Thou art standing invisible to eyes, Kaṇṇā;
> Even if thou wert to stand invisibly, I've no regrets.]

It is a song pregnant with the highest spiritual flavour, celestial fire full of clarity, felicity and simplicity enjoying popular appeal. And now husband Sadasivam and protector Rajaji are both no more and the Kanchi Acharya has attained *samādhi*! Not only Lord Krishna, but these patron entities of the musical doctor too now stand invisible! But they had placed her, as she deserved, on the highest pedestal of art and the learned musical soul, fully devoted to all of them, could feel their spiritual presence. It is here she excels and it is the reward for a life of devotion and dedication. Her *avatār*-like immaculate simplicity, calm demeanour exuding spiritual fragrance and the melodic musical phrases with all emphasis on *rāga, swara, bhāva* and *sāhitya,* all lucidly conceived, framed, jewelled and presented with embellished finesse and artistic grace leave behind in the listener *śāntam, soukhyam* and *maṅgalam,* a residual happy frame of mind and contentment which is a rare acquisition and experience.. A few gems of her rich musical experience and wisdom may be brought in here:

> 'The world-renowned maestro Yehudi Menuhin had been saying that, in the present day world, if peace and good conduct are to prevail and indiscipline to go, it is essential that appreciation of music should grow in a big way. He stated, "Let there be less of speaking and more of music and periods of silence when the music also has to stop." Compared to speaking, music itself has a way of leading on to silence. One cannot sing for as long as one can speak. **When we practise singing, body and mind get steeped in silence from time to time as a matter of**

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

course. How very meaningful is that silence, is something that can be realized only by those who have experienced that state!

'Teaching of music should be compulsory from primary classes to university level in the same way as one studies arithmetic, science, etc. Do all those who study mathematics become Ramanujans or those studying science become C.V.Ramans? In the same way, those studying music need not become an Ariyakudi or Semmangudi. **Study of music brings serenity of mind."**

The very mention of the name of B.S. Raja Ayyangar brings to mind his classical, exquisite and soul-filling song *Jagadōddhārana.* When M.S. sang it at the Sri Ram Mandali decades back, she told B.V.K. Sastri,

'Three days back I sang this song at Hassan. After the crowd of admirers melted away after expressing their appreciation. I saw an old gentleman standing. Slowly he came forward and expressed his appreciation of my music and more particularly my singing of the song. *Jagadōddhārana.* Then slightly hesitating he said, "I am B.S. Raja Ayyangar". I started trembling and said slowly," Pardon me, Sir, for taking up your masterpiece. I do not know whether I did a disservice to the song!' Raja Ayyangar, with tears in his eyes, said, "Madam, **I only popularized the song; but you gave life to it!'**

It was an honest statement of a noble musician who exhilarated the Carnatic forum with his delectable singing of that wonderful song. When such musicians sing such songs, it may be presumed that the *Nādabṛhmam* does enjoy the melody. The incident again brings to notice the humility of the titans. The song was sung by her at the U.N.O.concert.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or ever touched. They must be felt with the heart', said Helen Keller. Music is decidedly such a thing. The Father of the Nation himself has attested to the fact that Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi is one of the titanic crusading spirits unfolding the truth of this dictum. Her spouse Sadasivam was a freedom fighter, constructive worker, patron of music and journalist. The joint endeavours of this wonderful couple spread over five decades have enriched and embellished many a laudable cause. Two male and two female hands clasped each other in holy union six decades back and till Destiny intervened to take back the two male hands, the four hands lavishly embraced noble causes not like petty rivulets or mini waterfalls but of amazonian magnificence, munificence and magnitude. It is in the fitness of things that a great institution is named after them to sustain, continue and carry on the noble work and pave he way for a dynamic future for music and dance. N. Pattabhiraman, Editor-in-Chief, *Sruti*, the popular magazine on classical music and dance, has stepped in and presented to the world such an ambitious autonomous institution with immense potential, thoughtfully named ***Sāmudri*** [Subbulakshmi Sadasivam Music and Dance Resources Institute] based at Sirudavur near

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Chennai]. Bharat Ratna Ravi Shankar is its Chairman. The scheme is in competent hands and is sure to elicit massive patronage in India and abroad. It has to succeed.

Objectives: 'To safeguard archival materials and undertake development and dissemination of resource materials in the field of fine arts, it will have the following functional divisions:

Archives and Library	Learning Resources
Creative interactions	Cultural Orientation
Research Studies	Documentation

International cultural interaction & customer service/Information centre.

The institution envisions laudable objectives and result-oriented work to preserve, promote and develop the cultural heritage of India at national and international levels and beckons:

'Musicians, Music-lovers & Patrons! Pray, feel free to participate.
Join this historic crusade for Knowledge and Promotion of Arts:
Swim in this Ocean of Artistic Affluence, Wisdom and Pursuits

❋❋❋

Subbulakshmi Muthuswamy – Vocalist/Teacher: [b. August 22, 1940]

It is *Saṅgita Sāgara,* a musical ocean, with the patriarch legating rich classical music to every member of his family in copious measure so that the immense pleasure he derived as a musical soul shall continue to be enjoyed by every one of them. The house reverberates with perennial music and each member carries on the impartible musical legacy wherever he or she happens to be on this planet. Professor V. Lakshminarayana, violinist, vocalist and musicologist, was that patriarch. Violin became a family possession. Well-known violinists. L. Vaidyanathan, Dr. L. Subramanyam and Dr. L. Shankar are brothers and Violin duo M.Lalitha and M.Nandini are daughters to Subbulakshmi Muthuswamy.

Parents	:	Prof. V. Lakshminarayana & Seethalakshmi
Training in music under	:	Father Tiruparkadal Srinivasa Ayyangar, a very senior violinist

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Ramnad Krishnn, her uncle
Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar
Jayammal [*padams*]

Subbulakshmi Muthuswamy has served as Principal of a school. Has given concerts in Sri Lanka and Malaysia and has presented concerts to aid institutions. Has given play-back music in films. She has performed with her brothers as well as her daughters. With the rich legacy of the family and her own long experience, she has established a school in memory of her father and gives training in vocal music and violin to students from India and abroad.

***

R. Subbulakshmi –Vocalist; [b. January 14, 1936]

Place of birth	:	Kuzhithura in Kanyakumari district, a place abundantly enriched by nature.
Parents	:	V. Ramabhadran, a vocalist and nephew of T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar, a Sangita Kalanidhi & Ramalakshmi Ammal, daughter of vocalist Kalyani Ammal.
Training in music	:	Passed Ganabhushanam course at Sri Swati Tirunal Music Academy, Tiruvanantapuram in 1953
Advance training under	:	Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, K.R. Kedaranathn and Sherthalai Gopalan Nair
Debut	:	At Sadguru Tyagaraja Aradhana, Tiruvanthapuram in 1954
Post held	:	Music Instructor, Jawahar Bala Bhavan, Tiruvananthapuram during 1965-1992
Institution founded	:	Sri Mookambika Music and Dance Academy
Concert tour	:	United Arab Emirate

Subbulakshmi has been giving concerts at many centres in sabhas as well as on All India Radio. A 'B.High' grade artiste, she is a composer of merit for bharatanāṭyam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

in different languages and light music for All India Radio and Doordarshan. Has acted as judge for music competitions and done workshops. Dancer Tara Kalyani is her daughter. The musical and art heritage of the family continues.

❋❋❋

Musiri Subramania Ayyar – Master of *Bhāva Saṅgita:* [April 09, 1899 – March 24, 1975]

Sangita Kalanidhi Musiri Subramania Ayyar moved among the elite of the society, musical as well as others. Few could match his style of *bhāva saṅgita.* Soft, methodical, melodic, mellifluous, sweet, his music was *bhava*-intensive and instilled *bhava* in the listener so persuasively and seductively that *rasa* would flow out of the enriched minds and hearts of listeners. His rendition was a fine amalgam of the dramatic and the concert patterns in presenting the software, songs pregnant with noble emotions like kindness, pathos, pity, sorrow and distress. His voice was a fine blend of the mellifluous feminine and the upper octave felicity. There was a happy wedding of the two. His rendition soared to dizzy heights with felicity but without effort and without in any way diluting his grip and hold over *sruti, bhāva* or lyric. Nay, he delighted in his space flights and was at home like the Homa bird as described by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa in the upper octave like Kittappa and Sundarambal. which created direct impact on hearts in a measure few others were able to. A detailed account of his life is given in ***A Garland.***

His selection and rendition of tamil songs were master-strokes of concert techniques. When these songs were recorded, they reached far-flung corners furthering his name and fame. It could well be said that none has eclipsed his primacy in *bhāva saṅgita* on the concert stage; though it might have been possible for Kittappa on the dramatic stage had he chosen to live longer. The *cauka kāla* tempo he chose for many of the songs helped the portrayal and delineation of *rāga bhāva in extenso* leading to the effervescence of all hidden emotions to optimum. There was a happy blend of his melodic voice, the slow tempo he lavishly specialised in and the wealth of hidden lyrical emotions which he brought out exquisitely at concerts in a measure that was out of reach to others. Those have made his music unforgettable..

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran, Editor *Shanmukha*, refers to the therapeutic effect of Musiri's music. Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri, scholar and liberal, was suffering from severe cardiac attack. The doctor was far away and a messenger had been sent. Sastri lay unconscious. The record *Pāhi Rāmachandra Rāghava* [*Yadukulakāmbhōji*] was played

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

once. The famed scholar [then Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University] half opened his eyes and whispered, "Once more". The record was replayed repeatedly. He opened his eyes and they were moist! The song had presumably seduced and silenced the attack and taken comprehensive control of the heart that was responsive to chaste music. The song was sung by Musiri in the film Tukaram in which he donned the role of the saint. His music is sure to be the best instrument for musical therapy as it is based on Tyagaraja's *Śāntamu lēkha soukhyamu lēdu*. Even unmusical elements are sure to be lured, swayed and overwhelmed. It is rapturous indeed. **Narada's rendition melted icebergs and Hanuman's melted rocks. Sure Musiri's did melt human hearts and minds. He had no occasion to try his music with rocks and icebergs!**

He was the highest paid vidwan and he drew the largest of crowds. His gramaphone records elicited the largest of sales. The centenary of his birth was celebrated at many centres. He could feel the pulse of the audience correctly. [If there is any old wall at street corners still not demolished, one may not be surprised to find left-out wall posters announcing 'Musiri, Chowdiah, Mani' and the like.]

A *guru* of lavish parts, a distinguished first Principal of the College of Carnatic Music, Chennai, one of the Sangita Kalanidhis who had a stint in films, he was a multi-faceted personality. Said he:

> 'The essential difference between popular and classical music is that, while the one merely pleases by its melody, the other pleases also by its technical perfection.'
>
> 'Students should be initiated in the *lakṣanas* of both Hindustani and Carnatic systems as both are off-springs of the Indian genius.'
>
> 'Why separate the *lakṣana* and *lakṣya* apart? *Lakṣana* is inherent in *lakṣya*. Sing, sing and sing; the norms, the nuances, the tenets will dawn on the singer and he shall find what tradition is and feel what trends could add.'

On the charge of upcoming artistes playing to gallery, he had words of consolation. He said,

> 'An up-and-coming musician has to settle on his feet and find his place in the minds of the audience to avoid being treated casually and to achieve this, he has to present something that thrills and excites. But later on, he can stop and carry it on no further.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Musiri's cultured Humour:

If mathematics and music are cousins, humour is a near kith or kin to musicians without doubt. One witnesses the affinity of music to mathematics in *swara* exposition, in percussive presentations, in the songs of Saint Arunagirinathar, in the step and beats of the dancer's feet. Humour among musicians is a familiar, nay a vital virtue, as it fuels and ignites *manōdharma* too. Here is one from the pen of the Sangita Kalanidhi himself written in the patriotic daily *Swadēsamitran* in which Subramanya Bharati too had worked:

'That bus is the best mode of travel will be accepted even by *risis*. It is democratic and secular.

['**Democratic Secularism?**' - O, what a term of profound wisdom, political chicanery uses with liberty in this country?]

'And free from prejudices on grounds of caste, race, sex and age. The driver-conductor promulgates *ad hoc* rules of conduct! Foreign companies who manufacture the buses [buses were imported then] should have taken measurements of our famine-stricken Indians! Even then only if all the five are bodily born knit together like the Siamese twins, the five-seater could accommodate them all! I occupied a vacant seat.' [The vocalist maestro of vast popularity was not of the bulky type!]

'That seat is reserved for police inspector', cautioned the driver.

'Reserved! In buses too!!'

'Don't you know? Police is husband to us. We are their wives!'

'The stalwart driver [*nāyaka*] with a fighter mustache, how quickly he gets transformed into a *nāyaki?* I was haunted by the feeling, 'Why should I not assert my rights as a *nāyaka* [male] like the inspector'. But prudence prevailed since the wife in the driver might get into trouble with '**his**' husband!

'Just two or three lady passengers sufficed to chatter till they got down to keep our minds alert. And yet, they talk of male chauvinism! Males had necessarily to keep quiet.

'Suddenly the conductor put on his headwear and began to behave well! When I looked out, I sighted **his** husband [head constable] waiting to board it'

Music and subtle wit enjoy consanguinity without doubt!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

If delineation of *Todi rāga* became the intangible 'property' of Todi Sitaramier when alive and later of T.N. Rajarathinam Pillai, if *Kōdaiyilē iḷaippāṛṛi koḷḷum* and such other songs sung by S.G. Kittappa had attained immortality and remain unsurpassed, the melodic style, overflowing *bhāva* and clarity of *sāhitya* and *saṅgita* such as those mentioned below rendered by Ayyar have also turned quite his magnificent unassailable monopoly, answering all the legal prescriptions on copy rights. Others do sing the patented songs and sing well too. Though the heart yearns to respond and appreciate, still a lurking feeling, a feeling of resistance, rather an unaccountable sense of mental reservation persists, longs, rather cries out passionately for the endearing fragrant appeal of Musiri's rendition and conveys a thought that the delicate impact and impression shall never be disturbed nor ever violated! It is the Indian's strength, and at once his weakness, that the massive glory, the indescribable ecstasy and the indelible experience of something which he loved with honour shall ever remain inviolable akin to the love of the *riṣis* who are stated to have loved Rama and were born to love him still as *gōpis* in their rebirth!. Could it be called 'the chastity of genuine appreciation'. If it could be so, the feelings of the admirers are *dharmapatnis* [*nāyakis*] to the music of Musiri which assumes the role of *Nāyaka*!

Nagumōmu ganaleni	*Ābhēri*
Viritta senjadayāda	*Rāgamālika*
Navasiddhi peṛṛālum	*Karaharapriya*
Ettanai ṣonnālum	*Sāvēri*
Tiruvaḍi saranam	*Kāmbhōji*
Ihaparam tarum	*Khamās*
Nirajākṣi	*Hindōlam and*
Pāhi Rāma	*Yadukulakāmbhōji*

Sangita Kalaratna, the genial S. Rajam observes:

'Musiri sang at a high pitch, still managing to modulate his voice to produce thick and thin shades. His *sruti* alignment was immaculate and handling of notes accurate. His *rāga* essays were sedate, *sans* frills and shrills. The pace of singing was his own. Someone's *vilamba kāla* would be his *madhyama kāla*. Though his tempo was unique, he stayed within limits always. **Speed and tempo are not one and the same** and one should not confuse himself while speaking of Musiri's. His speed enabled him to bring out the essence of *sāhitya bhāva* and *rāga bhāva* exquisitely. A great deal of the credit for popularizing

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

tamil songs belongs to him. His fame in this resulted in his being pressurized to sing some tamil songs, though not appropriate to the occasion, at weddings!. *Bhāva* was highlighted to the optimum in his concerts.'

That the captivating lure and appeal of his records persist and remain constant to this day is an open tribute to his mastery of *sāhitya, saṅgita*, style and rendition. S.Y. Krishnaswamy, a connoisseur from the Civil Services, accurately analyzing the style of Musiri Subramania Ayyar, had observed:

> 'Although he preferred to sing in slow tempo, which suited his personal temperament, he was fully aware of the beauties of *madhyamakāla*. There is no such thing as absolute slow or absolute fast movement.These are relative to one's style of rendition. There is an inherent inner psychology exemplified by Tyagaraja in song *Śanthamulēka, soukhyamulēdu* [no tranquility, no joyous wellbeing]. This was primarily the guiding force in the life and art of Musiri.'

The learned vocalist and teacher [Musiri] has, in his profound wisdom observed:

> 'The essential difference between popular and classical music is that while the one merely pleases with its melody, the other pleases by its technical perfection in addition. While technical delineation of *sāhitya* and *rāga* is vital to classical music, it may not appeal much to the uninitiated lay. Great masters and renowned authors of treatises of the past had therefore taken great pains to preserve the distinct characteristics of *rāgas*. Their music was woven around *rāgas* and musicians can multiply the combinations and ramifications according to their *manōdharma* which has few limits!'
>
> [Speech at the Music Academy, Chennai in 1939.]

His donning the role of Tukaram in the film was itself a pleasant portrayal of his style and the music he sang in it was enlivening. As a teacher and first Principal of the College of Carnatic Music, Chennai, he was strict, stern, painstaking and no wonder, the College started on a firm footing and saw its glorious days quite soon though unfortunately it has not chosen to retain its image, grade and merit.

Musiri's nephew Tyagarajan has been presenting consistently a musical tribute [concert] to the great vocalist every month – perhaps the only one of the kind! A grateful public too is celebrating the centenary of his birth on a vast scale.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Mahākavi Subramanya Bhārati - A colossus of multi-faceted dynamism: [December 11, 1882 – September 12, 1921]

It is a flat endless carpet of semi-arid terrain, the people of which may now and then, not necessarily, be happy if and when adequate rains descend. The region is the most eligible to invoke, and the perfect qualifying proof to, the famous couplet of administrative wisdom of Sage Tiruvalluvar that 'People in tracts depending on the vagaries of occasional rains are those who eternally look to the ruler [government] for sustenance' – *Vāṉōkki vaḷum ulagellām mannavan kōlnōkki vaḷum kuḍi* (Kural 542). The musical titan of vast parts and deep penetration, wedded to spiritual pursuits heart and soul, Muthuswami Dikṣitar, on return from his pilgrimage in the north, was trekking through this sparcely-populated, near-dreary area alone in search of his brother, perhaps his only relative then alive, presumably with his *madisanji* [fibre bag] containing just a pair of clothes, *vibhūti* and *pūja* materials. What else had he in this world? Absolutely nothing *sans* intellectual properties, cerebral assets such as *vāggēyakāra* eminence, scholarship in ancient lore, absolute *bhakti,* astrology and profound spiritual wisdom which might have won the estseem of a King Janaka or the good king Parikshit. It was a fact that he was steadfast in his enduring marriage with economic poverty in material terms. He had never chosen, nor was there any occasion, to contradict or modify *Hiranmayim Lakṣmim sadha bhajāmi*; *hinamana vasrayam tyajāmi* [*Lalitha*]. In fact, is there any case other than the blessed devotee Kuchela [Sudhama] where any *bhakta* had made a U-turn from rags to riches? [Pray, let me not be condemned as an atheist, which certainly I am not qualified to be].

His enlightened *advaitic* heart melted on seeing the misery of the people. The *advaiti* perceived not human beings with parched mouths and clothes in rags but saw symbolic *Paramātman* in those famished bodies. His heart probably sang silently pulsating with pity in *rāga Sahāna,* 'Lord, Thou art starving; *sans* rains; wherefrom could the *neivedya* [food offering to gods, but here to these starving people] come from?' His heart dictated that he should help them first before moving on his journey. He sang the famous crisp *kriti* '*Ānandamrta karṣini in rāga Amṛtavarṣini* and brought copious rains to the rain-starved region. Can there be eternal annual visits by a Dikshitar to secure rains? However it is this area that gave the spiritual colossus, Sri Ramana Rishi from Tiruchuli and Sri Subramanya Bharati, the socio-political and domineering, gigantic patriot-*vāggēyakāra* from Ettayapuram. Where the soil is dry, the stray jasmine that grows smells sweeter! How true it is even among humans!

[Just an incidental, casual observation that springs out of the last two sentences. When the English Member of the Government of India – similar to the Union Minister for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Home - went on praising, in the Parliament, the living conditions in Andamans, then reserved mostly for outlawed criminals, renowned parliamentarian Satyamurti quipped, 'Why not you settle down there?' Even so, some one may like to stay in Ettayapuram region provided Dikshitar visits annually and sings!! With copious rains, it is ideal region indeed. Ettayapuram celebrates Dikṣhitar *ārādhana* annually which needs patronage of all. I was blest with the opportunity to sing at two successive *ārādhanas!*]

The flame and spirit of independence that lay dormant since 1857 had once again been kindled in 1885 and political, economic and social environment needed men of resolute will and determination, absolute patriotism and readiness to sacrifice theirs all, scholarship with mastery in arts and above all **communicative skills** to arouse the slumbering masses of Tamil Nadu, etc., sway their feelings and lead them on the path of social emancipation, economic development and political freedom. A humble family at Ettayapuram headed by Chinnaswami Ayyar had already presented a child on December 11, 1882 as if in anticipation to answer the call of the mother country for such a person. The child lost its mother quite early but it did not deter his progress. That it was born with a mission was evident quite early when it got the title 'Bharati' at the age of just eleven! Education stopped with the fifth form [10th standard]. Where is need for a degree to men of destiny and who has the competence and authority to confer that? In tune with the prevailing practice, at the age of sixteen, the age made immortal by Sage Markandeya, he married, rather was married to, Chellammal then aged seven! Not improbable that both of them had played pebbles on the slumbering streets of little Ettayapuram! Bharati's father died when Chellammal progressed to the age of eight!

Four years at Benares [1898-1902] was spent in studies. Those were the impressionable years of the great bard-in-the-making. The ancient city of Benares with its penetrating roots in the vibrant history of Bharat, varied culture and hoary civilization should have suckled him, as it did with Muthuswami Dikṣitar of the Classical Carnatic Trinity, with precious intellectual gifts that are rare and unavailable in schools and colleges or anywhere. On return, his innate genius in composing tamil songs sprang into action and quite soon, his song appeared in *Vivēkabhānu* in print and for a time in 1904 he was teacher of tamil in the Setupati School, Madurai. His *Swadēsa Gītaṅgal* appeared in book form in 1908 and he joined the paper *India.* He evaded arrest and settled in Pondicherry, then a French possession, and continued the publication of *India* for two years.

He bade good bye to Pondicherry in 1918 and after a year reached Madras in 1919 and slipped into eternity, before he could complete his thirty-ninth year, on September 11-12, 1921. Alexander lived for thirty-three years. Adi Sankara and Swami Viekananda

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

lived and achieved all only within that span of life. And Bharati too stuck to that rule hinted by the galaxy of all-time greats and left when the flesh was in full bloom though there was much more to be sung about! He sang for, and on the attainment and attendant joy of, freedom but left the planet twenty-six long years before it was achieved. That, in brief, is a life of perpetual struggle against imperialism, superstition, social evils, economic oppression and all that had to be fought against. His life is the most appropriate example for any wise man or woman to draw inspiration from and follow, quite in keeping with what Vivekananda said:

> 'Arise! Awake! Onward! I only tell you this, that whoever
> sings my songs* will imbibe my spirit! Have faith! Onward!'
> [*Words underlined substituted for 'reads my letter'.]

It has been true. There is no substitute to the variety, theme, *sahitya, sangita* and eloquence of the songs of Bharati on patriotism or any other subject. The lyric, prosody, presentation and style, selection of themes and music are all *par excellence.* They appeal to mind and heart, young and old and, in short, to everyone who listens and has honest aspiration, ambition, aptitude and way of life. The songs had inspired and spurred millions in villages and towns to action for over eight decades and shall continue to do so since they are not time-bound in relevance and application. This was the view expressed by stalwart patriot, Satyamurti in the Legislative Assembly of Madras when the British government proscribed some of his songs in pre-Independence days.

It is remarkable that Subramanya Bharati had drawn inspiration from the songs of Gopalakrishna Bharati who died just a year before he was born and when the epic drama, *Nandanār* was the rage in villages and towns, in dramas and concerts. If Gandhiji drew inspiration on seeing the drama on Harischandra while young, surely Subramanya Bharati should have seen *Nandanār* and fuelled his burning innate genius. **The fact that this had not been recorded by any is immaterial since his songs eloquently reveal and bear testimony to the same beyond any doubt.**

Gopalakrishna Bharati	**Subramanya Bharati**
Mādu tinnum pulaiyā *Unakku Mārgaḷi tirunālō?*	*Thondu śeyyum adimai* *Unakku sudandiram ninaivōdā?*
Jñāyam tānō nīr śollum *Oy, Naṇdanārē, namma jāthikkadukkumō?*	*Oy, Tilakarē, namma jāthikkadukkumō* *Śeyvadu śariyō, śollum.*
Nāmenna śeyvōm pulayarē, indha	*Nāmenna śeyvom thuṇaivarē, indha*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bhoomiyilillāda pudumaiyai kaṇḍōm *Bhoomiyilillada pudumaiyai kaṇḍōm.*

Tillaivelile kalandu kondāl avar
Tirumbiyum varuvārō!

Vīra sudandiram vēndi nindṛār avar
vērondrum kolvārō!

And many more. **Hindu philosophy says that soul is immortal and so it could be safely asserted that the soul that cast away the body that housed Gopalakrishna Bharati in Thanjavur district in 1881 travelled to Ettayapuram and took over the body that was to be Subramanya Bharati in 1882! It should be so.** Both were eminent scholars and poets imbued with fervour to fight against injustice; were poor in economic terms and have left a legacy that is imperishable. Gopalakrishna Bharati did not sing on patriotism since the torch of freedom struggle had not been lit during his time. He died four years before the Indian National Congress was conceived on the sands of Marina.

Subrarhanya Bharati is normally taken as an aggressive freedom fighter and it is true. But that aggressive frame housed a heart full of love, affection, pity and sympathy that melted like butter instantaneously. He was shocked at the condition of those working in sugarcane farms [*Karumbu thōttattilē*] and shed tears at their fate. When he thought of the steep fall in the condition of brave maravas, he lamented that it had lost its pride in self-respect and primacy in fighting with swords and bows [*Vāl valiyum vēl valiyum pōchē*]. He could not comprehend the peevish, slavish depravity, lack of moral compunction of those cringing before the foreign employers and lashed out at them in the crisp and enchanting song *Nadippu Swadēsigal* [pseudo natives] - 'Dear, these people have neither courage in hearts nor faith in capability. They boast aloud; but are mere fighters with words!. Can impotent people taste real joy? Eyes, two numbers they have, but vision they lack. What is the use of talking of them?' – and so on, he gives vent to his natural anger and profound sorrow spinning quite a lot of facts on the miserable conduct of such pseudo people. It is a long list of social and moral degradation he highlights in another song, *Nenju porukkudillayē, indha nilai ketta manidarai ninaittuvittāl* [It is impossible to contain emotions or bear with them when reminded of this depraved lot.] Such songs are many. He lived in a *mānasīkha* world of heroes like Rama, Krishna, Harischandra, Asoka, Tilak, Panchali and Kannagi, with Kappolotti Chidambaram, Va.Ve. Su. Ayyar, etc., It was all noble elements of pure air and burning fire and baser elements they countenanced not.

Bharati has held the highest respect to men of scholarship, courage and eminence. Thus he has praise for the scholarly saint, Tayumanavar for his immortal songs on this life and thereafter. He goes rightly delirious in praise of Sister Nivedita - 'Thou art *neivēdya* to Grace, a Temple of Love, the Sun enlightening and destroying darkness in my mind, etc.' How glorious lives of such historic personalities have been screened away from youth is a matter for despair!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

That Bharati was truly religious and spiritual is seen in many songs. What he hated were superstition, wasteful practices and false conduct in the name of caste and religion. Singing on Abhedananda, he hails him for his colossal erudition and scholarship in *Vēdas* and *Upaniṣads* and such songs reveal Bharati's own rare scholarship in spiritual matters and his unassailable absolute beliefs. The bard assures that Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar, the doyen and grand old man of tamil scholars, has become immortal for his monumental contribution to tamil literature that is unmatched and would remain so for all times. Is the world lauding his contribution adequately? Have the youth been enlightened on his wonderful pioneering work in bringing out the treasures of tamil literature and culture back to its pristine glory? Puny creatures are being hailed day in and day out!

Saṅgita Sampradāya Pradarśini is the first-ever thesaurus in Classical Carnatic Music authored by scholar musicologist, Subbarama Dikshitar, a scion of the scholarly Dikṣitar family. It was published in 1904 at Ettayapuram and Dikṣitar lived between 1839-1906. Young Subramanya Bharati had evidently enjoyed a very close look at him, admired his arduous work and respected his scholarly eminence. In his threnody on Dikṣitar, one finds Bharati's total admiration and boundless sorrow at his demise.

'Thou wert the perennial fountain of *swaras*,
A Vibhishana among *asuras*, the lotus amidst slush ,
born in a highly respected family by the grace of Narada...'

He grows eloquent as if he was giving an oration and adds:

With Karṇa, charity was chased out;
With Kambar, lyric left our shores;
With Pārtha, valour had vanished; and
With Subbarama, music with all its *rāga* treasures disappeared!'

He laments with pathos, 'What sin have we committed? When shall see the like of him?' There is in fact a mini *archana* too to Subbarama Dikshitar, which he richly deserved. Genuine, pure tribute from the superb man of action and words!

Pre-Independence meetings in tamil speaking areas resounded and reverberated with Bharati's songs like *Sendamiḻ Nāḍennum pōdinilē*. The very mention of the word 'Sentamizh Nadu' is honeyed sweetness to the ear! Pandithurai Thevar, Founder of the Tamil Sangham, Madurai once announced that prizes would be awsarded to good songs on tamil and Tamil Nadu. Bharati was requested to compose one and he did it. But he said that such vibrant songs of nationalist content would not be accepted by Thevar and, so, he composed this exquisite song *Sendamiḻ Nādennum* according to Bharatidasan.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bharati composed songs for Freedom Movement, for celebrations in Free India, for a Hundred Years Plan for Economic Resurgence and Development, for social uplift and above all, as is rarely known, on Hindu philosophy. He had extensively dealt with the *lakṣanas* of Carnatic music. He was a mighty master in composition; his lyric is felicitous, appealing and charming. His songs can be sung in many *rāgas*. Film and concert music and the dance world have reaped rich harvests by using his songs for the last several decades. The world is still to appreciate him adequately and the musical world has still a treasure-house of songs in his compositions to indent on. In fact, his is one of the most glorious lives of Bharat. He was sincere to friends; steadfast to principles and passionately dedicated to music giving it the first taste of the lives and aspirations, trials and tribulations of the common man, for whom many a candidate for elections sheds copious [often crocodile] tears [*nilai ketta manidar!*]! He was an institution himself, a university and above all the noblest musical soul. His approach to the economic field out-reached all the 'isms' the world knows of. A nationalist and an internationalist, a great patriot, his vision was large, conception deep and his pronounced delivery immaculately appealing. A true Indian, a good man, a great lovable person and one who inspired all who knew him, he breathed what was good and great.

Bharati had in Bharatidasan a distinguished disciple. Once the disciple asked the master to clarify how he [Bharati] who had described Tamil Nadu as '*Āriyabhūmi*' earlier had later come to describe it as 'Father land' and how he, having earlier referred to the works of Avvaiyar only, had later come to include *Śilappadikāram* and *Tirukkural*. The great National Poet clarified, "My father was a court vidwan at Ettayapuram. Great scholars would come and discuss with my father on *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam*, etc. Only later I came across the other works you refer to and naturally am won over by their poetic grace and grandeur. So, I have included them all when I became wiser with the fuller knowledge of those great epics, etc and I have later described Tamil Nadu as 'Father Land'."

Plain speaking and humility in personal life were his prime virtues. 'We have different dishes for our food. Each of the dishes has a taste and all are good and taste excellent at different times. It is the mind that grades each, now and then, one as better and another as secondary. One should take pleasure in taking even cold rice and *sundakkāy* soup [cheap food normally taken by poor]. Gandhiji fasted to mend and correct the outlook and approach of the country; we should fast to correct our own minds. Equanimity of mind is essential.' Does not Bharati echo what Sri Krishna expounded in *Bhagavad Gita?*

'What is insatiable?' Bharati shouts, '*Eureka;* I have found out that specific *curry* [vegetable preparation in daily food] which satiates not! For saints and sages, it is God-consciousness. For me it is only she! My Chellammal! [his spouse]' Here Bharati gives

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

vent to his adoration of his dear, simple, good wife who had shared his wants and sufferings, pangs and pains and nothing better except God-blest wedded union with a man with a mission! Where was enjoyment to a couple who had nothing worthwhile in material terms or to him who was hunted by the British police and saw nothing but ceaseless fight against native betrayal and foreign hegemony. Bharatidasan came to Chennai and wanted to take a photo of his. Bharati was in bones physically though his mind was alert as ever. His body was covered with his usual coat, etc., and the bones were screened off. **It is that photo that is now current. People may have little knowledge of the utterly poor economic condition of the great vibrant man when the photo was taken!**

Mother India sheds tears, '*Thannīr vittō valartōm Sarvēśa ippayirai, kaṇṇīrāl kāthōm, karuka tiruvulamō*' [Did we nurse this tender crop [this Child of Bharat] with water? No, we tended it with tears! Is it your wish that it should wither!]

***

Prof. M. Subramonia Sarma –Violinist: [b. March 23, 1937]

Place of birth	:	Alappuzha in Kerala
Parentage	:	K. Mahadeva Ayyar, mridangist - father
	:	Vechur Krishna Ayyar, mridangist – grandfather
Musical training under	:	Father and brothers Passed Ganabhushanam getting first rank.
Debut	:	At the age of 12 playing with his brothers
Posts held	:	Assistant Professor [1961], Professor [1984-1992], SST College of Music, Tiruvanthapuram.
Honour	:	Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Award
Foreign tours	:	U.K.,U.S.A., Gulf countries, Singapore, etc., with K.J. Yesudas and Mavelikara Krishnankutty Nair.

Subramonia Sarma , born in a family of percussionists, took to violin and has trained his son and daughter, besides many others in the same instrument. 'A' grade artist, he has been giving solo concerts [with or without his son or daughter as duo] and provides

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

accompaniment in large numbers to senior vidwans on All India Radio, television and other forums in India and abroad. Has provided violin accompaniment to K.J. Yesudas for thirty years in his musical tours. Sarma is a traditionalist who believes in a violinist being a vocalist too to bring out the best of *sāhitya* and *saṅgita bhāva* in each piece.

***

Dr. [Mrs] Sulochana Rajendran – A multi-faceted Musical Soul: [b. 1934]

A cultured artiste, erudite teacher and mature journalist, Dr. Sulochana Rajendran is a multi-faceted, amiable musical personality, who, incidentally, wields a facile pen promoting the cause of music, the oldest and living fine art of the world. Musical circles in Mumbai and elsewhere are deeply indebted to her for her rich and weighty contribution. Her early impressionable years had evidently left an impact in moulding her personality. Born in Rangoon, then a part of the British Empire, she had occasion to stay with her aunt and learn music at Thanjavur, then the citadel of arts and had her schooling at Madras, the metropolis of fine of arts before moving over to Delhi and later to Mumbai, the commercial capital of the country. As clarified by her, 'I grew as a child in the healthy environs of a large, well-knit family, many of whose members had distinguished themselves in social service, education, fine arts, literature, law and [then the powerful and efficient] bureaucracy and had training in music right from childhood.'

With intellectual, cultivated families, music from time immemorial and dance in recent decades have been *sine quo non* and girls do take to them as fish to water. Echoing the earnest belief of Hindus, Subramanya Bharati has said that women should be taught music positively and a home humming with music is blest with auspicious boons. Father Ramamurti enjoyed a high-pitched voice, donned female roles in amateur dramas. At Rangoon, there were *bhajans* and performances in which the family of Dr. Sulochana too participated. The conductor, a relative of her, was none other than the sensational art critic, Subbudu [P.V. Subramanian] of Delhi. Sulochana was in this intellectual, happy, congenial environment.. A musical soul, the learned doctor and her spouse, son of veteran journalist and freedom fighter Stalin K. Srinivasan, have ensured in their turn that their daughters, both medicos, are accomplished *bharatanāṭya* artistes. **Let there be a dictum 'Once a house of art and culture, always so it shall be! What about musical and dance therapy, a rich field to experiment! Psycho, ortho, etc., fields need the services of these music-nrtya conscious medicos! Will they respond?**

[Of course, the family underwent untold tribulations and travails of World War II and the attendant evacuation and mass exodus of Indians from Burma, the like of which was

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

regrettably re-enacted with savage results during the horrid, manipulated Partition of the country and its aftermath. There was no Mahatma Gandhi then to intercede as he did to save the muslims in India though unfortunately he could do precious little to save the lives of their counterparts in Pakistan. Her father, relative and music critic Subbudu and another officer, also a relative, were among the last batch of evacuees to leave Burma by land through hills, dales and jungles. Quite a horrid flight from the jaws of dreaded destruction and instant death every moment! Perhaps their innate love of music kept them inseparable company and injected faith, hope and courage! It would be a study worthy of record if details of musical solace availed of are made available. Will this world be ever spared of recurrences of these! No hopes!].

Parents	:	V.V. Ramamurti, M.A.,B.L., A.C.I.I. [London], Naval Store Officer and Kamala
Education	:	Lady Willingdon High School Master of Arts at Christian College, Madras. Ph. D. after research work at Fr. Hera's Institute of Historical Research & Culture
Training in music under	:	K A. Venkataraman, prime disciple of Alathur Sivasubramania Ayyar Ramachandra Ayyar in Dikṣitar *kṛitis*
Debut	:	In 1954, at Sri Kamakshi Amman Temple, Thanjavur in which Sri Syama Sastri of the Classical Trinity once did service!
Posts held	:	Teaching at the Bombay University Assistant Editor, *Thought*, Delhi – a weekly devoted to politics literature and culture [five years]. She covered the East-West Music Conference, 1964 at Delhi Lecturer, Sri Venkateswara College, Delhi. Member, Managing Committee, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangita Sabha, Mumbhai Director, Shaṅmukhananda Sangita Vidyalaya since 1991 Editor, *Shanmukha*, Sabha's quarterly since 1989. Visiting Faculty & Examiner, University of Bombay.
Honours	:	Kala Sevaka Sudhakara by Music Triangle, Mumbhai in 1998

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Marriage taking her back to Bombay from Delhi in 1965, she became a free lance columnist and critic on music, dance and culture for many dailies, weeklies, etc. She has been contributing scores of scholarly, well-researched, thought-provoking articles, enjoying depth of vision, insight, thought and conception. There is felicity of expression, free-flow of diction and clarity of thought and presentation, besides a robust approach to men and matters. She presents lecture-demonstrations and talks on varied themes at various forums.

Kinnari is her *nom de plume* adopted now and then. Kinnara is a mythical being with a human figure and the head of a horse while Kinnari is a female Kinnara or a kind of lute. This was adopted when she was a columnist and sees no reason to discard it when she is an Editor! *Shanmukha* thrives on her endeavours.

'Humility, thy name is Dr. Sulochana Rajendran' is the proper expression that qualifies every action and approach of the learned doctor. After covering about 1400 lives so far in four volumes of *Garlands,* I finally woke up on an auspicious morn like Rip Van Winkle to ask for her bio data. She quietly said:

'I could never imagine self-promotion. Nor the trait is in the family. I hesitated to introduce myself. But after reading your letter, I was persuaded to send the bio data.'

'Self-knowledge, self-control and self-reverence [*sans* ego] these alone lead life to sovereign power', says the great English poet, Lord Tennyson. It is proved true in the lives of cultured intellectuals indeed. Is it not worthy of emulation though difficult?

❋❋❋

V. Surendran – Mridangist: [b. August 14, 1942]

Parents	:	R. Velayudhan Nair & Kamalakshi Ammal
General qualification	:	S.S.L.C.
Debut	:	Accompanying Vechur Hariharasubramania Ayyar in 1963 at Trivandrum
Posts held	:	Tutor, SST College, Trivandrum in 1970 Joined All India Radio 1974 : 'A' grade artiste
Concert tours	:	Festival of India 1992 in Germany, Holland Austria, Middle East, Singapore, etc.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Honours	:	Laya Ratna from Kerala Sastra Samakarika Samiti Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Award in 1998
Recordings	:	One with K.S.Gopalakrishnan and another with Neyyatinkara Vasudevan.

Surendran was born in a memorable period in the history of Bharat at Travancore which chose and sought to play a significant, peculiar political role on the eve of the the independence of the country. Had his percussive training under Mavelikkara K. Velukutty Nair and passed the Gana Bhushanam course in mridangam in 1962. He came under the celebrated veteran Palghat Mani Ayyar during 1963-65 for advanced training. He is glad to say, 'I was the first Keralite to get this opportunity.' Surendran has been providing able accompaniment to prominent vidwans at concerts. Has conducted 'Percussion Only' concerts with others on instruments like chenda, idakka, timili, maddalam, etc.

***

Swati Tirunal Maharajah - Father of Carnatic Music in Kerala: [April 16, 1813 - December 25, 1846]

The memorable life of Swati Tirunal Maharajah brings to focus the advent and spread of Carnatic music in Kerala. Owing to the political legacy inherited by him, he was less a ruler than a promoter and connoisseur of arts. It is as a composer of multi-structured songs full of *bhakti* and *bhāva-rasa,* he is remembered and honoured. For a fuller life sketch, *A Garland* [pages 356-9] and *Yet Another Garland* [pages 38-41] may be perused. There was a highly emotional and interesting episode, a controversy, concerning his very existence, life as composer etc., sponsored and pursued with ruthless vigour by veena maestro Dr. S. Balachander. Some light on it is brought in here.

Veena Dr. S. Balachander: The litigation on Swati Tirunal lapsed unheard!

Veena Dr. Balachander [January 18, 1927 - April 13, 1990] was not a mere veena vidwan of the highest repute but was an actor, film director, percussionist, musicologist, indefatigable investigator of rich acumen and rare adventurous spirit and many more. He was admittedly effective and efficient in whatever he took up and did succeed in every field

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and every endeavour he chose except that last one in which he wanted to 'explode a myth' but the over-riding hands of fate sniffed out his soul before the last word was heard on the issue he raised. His life of musical and artistic dynamism has been covered extensively in *Another Garland* which may be perused.

The veena virtuoso, who was crowned with and delighted in successive honours, alleged in good faith and with conviction that the very existence of a Swati Tirunal Maharajah was disputable as it was a 'concoction and fabrication'. He quoted Chidambara Vadyar's book of 1916 to prove that the Maharajah was born under the constellation of *Anusham* and not *Swāti* and on fifth Edavom [May, 1813]. He drew confirmation from the Indian Ephemeris of Swamikannu Pillai [1915] to his stand that the corresponding star on fifth Edavom was *Anusham* only and not *Swāti*! That being so, how could there be a Swati Tirunal Maharajah was his contention.

The controversy commenced softly in 1985 when he alleged that some of the songs attributed to the Maharajah might be by his courtiers. This was not an unreasonable contention as has been proved in such and similar cases. Later he stumbled on what he called 'clinching evidence' in a book on Hindu Music published by Gayan Samaj, Pune in 1887 recording a visit by the then Maharajah of Travancore to Pune in 1880s and also the reply given by him to a question from the Samaj Secretary, Sahasrabudhi in respect of a composition later credited to Swati Tirunal. 'The reply read out by the then Devan said that the song *Sarasa samamukha* [*Khamās*] was composed by Maharajah Kulasekhara Perumal [and not by Swati Tirunal]. Balachander claimed that this event and record established that the practice of using star names for rulers did not exist in the Travancore dynasty then. He asserted that the absence of any star name in the book clearly indicated that the name was '**a hoax and motivated humbug**'. He pointed out further that no genealogical tables of the royal dynasty had become available as usual. He quoted the same Samaj publication to prove that **the Maharajah had not been listed at all** in the book, which lists out about 120 principal musicians of merit of the 19th century C.E. including the Trinity of Carnatic music. He said that he felt angry when a book of 1985 brought out by a Trivandrum publisher described the Maharajah as one of the Classical Carnatic Trinity

> 'Not only I was shocked but ordained to unearth startling revelations and discover incriminating evidence.'

He was critical of the book brought out by the National Book Trust also and demanded its withdrawal.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Musicologist and Critic B.V.K. Sastri wrote in 1990:

> 'The energy and expense involved in the controversy were amazing. Hundreds of letters were shot off in various directions. Finally the *magnum opus*, a book, came out published by him. When his endeavours and tirades did not bring any reaction, **he filed a case in the High Court, Madras. But before its disposal, he passed away at Bhilai.'**

An illustrious musical life of high repute and proven merit got diverted by conviction to *de novo* pioneering investigative endeavours. Such an activity was practically unknown earlier. Unfortunately he died before be could secure a verdict. There was none interested in pursuing the issue! This was a chapter in his illustrious life that finds no parallel in the life of any other *vidwan*! He was indeed a symbol of the spirit of Sage Nakkirar who stuck to his view on the fragrance of hairs of women even when challenged by Lord! The issues raised by Balachander were:–

i. **whether there was ever a ruler of the name of Swati Tirunal;**

ii. **whether naming the rulers after the constellation at the time of their birth was customary in the royal family of Travancore; and**

iii. **whether the ruler-composer was not a fiction of imagination 'created' by some interested and crediting him with numerous songs, etc.,**

Vainika P. Harihara Ayyar of Tiruvananthapuram [b. December 10, 1932]answered Vainika Balachander!

The counter to the challenge has been elaborately presented in an article in the publication titled *Swāti Tirunāl* 1984 by Vainika P. Hariharan of Trivandrum [whose life is covered at pages 133-134 *Another Garland*]. He is the grandson of Suchindram Padmanabha Bhagavatar, whose elder brother, Padmanabhapuram Sankaranarayana Bhagavatar [1846-1888] was a disciple of Suchindram Sathu Bhagavatar who graced the Travancore Court. The family naturally had close relations with prominent Court artistes of the period and was in full knowledge of the affairs of royalty. Harihara Ayyar recollects how when he was aged about eight years. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar went over to his house and of others to collect songs of Swati Tirunal with notation based on each being sung by those who knew. He avers that the songs of Swati Tirunal were being sung at the temple of Sri Padmanabhaswami, Travancore from the days of the composer and are being continued. When Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar visited the Court of the successor

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

ruler, Ayilam Tirunal, the songs of Swati Tirunal were sung before him and were much appreciated by the visiting maestro.

In further proof of the facts that Swati Tirunal and his songs were not concoctions and were popular long before Muthiah Bhagavatar commenced his work, Ayyar argues that some songs had been included in the book *Gāyakalōchanam* [1902] of Tachur Singaracharier and *Saṅgita Sampradāya Pradarśini* [1905] of Subbarama Dikṣitar as 'compositions of Kulasekhara Maharajah'. Further the *Travancore Manual* [1906] mentions the popularity of the songs in deltaic tracts of Krishna and Godavari. When Chidambara Vadyar collected and presented 312 compositions in book form in 1916, Irayiamman Tampi, Meruswami and others were there [and had not objected]. In 1917 Ranganathier had brought out the book *Bālamṛtam* containing 125 songs with notation. Since the songs of Syama Sastri were not much known in Kerala then, Swati Tirunal along with Sri Thyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikṣitar had been presented as the Classical Carnatic Trinity innocently without meaning any discourtesy. The passionate plea of Ayyar is that the doubts and objections raised are unfounded and were not fair to the royal composer.

The two sides remained, it would appear to the last, on the opposite banks of the 'River of Sangita Sahitya' and carried on and fuelled the controversy. A few had resorted to cursing Balachander. It is unfortunate that accredited institutions and authorities failed to intervene, bring together knowledgeable Swati Tirunal admirers and Balachander for a dispassionate discussion to give a proper quietus to the issues. It was possible, since the songs are there intact and many of them are in continuous use at concerts and they are excellent and appealing in *sāhitya* and *saṅgita* with all prosodic beauties and are worthy additions to the repertoire. The issue was only about Sage Valmiki and Sage Vyasa, since *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* were a reality. Big guns had preferred to be silent!

The pro-Swati Tirunal side is surely in a strong position as the entire Palace records, volumes of communications with the British Resident, government records and orders and quite so many other items should positively be there and they could be brought forth to silence subsisting doubts. Non production and absence of any such evidence and the intriguing silence in that respect had given rise to doubts and misgivings. The prime issue would seem to be that there was only a 'Kulasekhara' but not 'Swati Tirunal', which has been alleged to be the product of a fertile imagination.

That there was a mix-up of some songs of others with those of royalty could normally be a real possibility. It could be even unintentional since primary credit goes to the ruler, the general, the captain and the leader. It is the Law of Escheat. Just as all waters reach the ocean, all compositions not claimed and got credited to the ledger folios of other claimants

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

might have been entered in the folio of the ruler based on the *mudra,* etc.

***

Tyagaraja: Greatest of Carnatic Composers [May 4, 1767 – January 7, 1847]

Excels in Elevating Thoughts:

Unprivileged! Saint Tyagaraja ostensibly feels envious of Lakşmana's precious luck and privilege to sing most pleasingly on the philosophy and *avatāra mahima* of his elder brother [Sri Rama] invoking endearing popular *rāgas*. Not only his music is enthralling but it has been enriched with extensive *ālāpanas*! He goes eloquent poetically and his imaginative faculty runs riot in his song *Mitri Bhāgyame bhāgyamu manasa* in [*Karaharapriya*] Being *a* composer-musician of unexceptional cerebral eminence, he regrets that he had not been blest with a like privilege! The beauty in conception and the sequential ennobling elevating thought are charming! [Inspired by such a song of his, in a tamil film the heroine doing puja to the icon of Lord Siva with Devi Parvati on His lap challengingly asks in a song, '*Ennilum Aval Umakku ētravalō, Swāmi*?' [Is She better suited or qualified than me to You?] A beautiful poetic conception!

Camaraderie: Being a *bhāgavata* himself, he holds the highest opinion of other *bhāgavatas*. He has little professional jealousy as may be usual in such cases and salutes them all with deep respect for their wisdom and expertise in *swara, laya, rāga* and *bhakti*-soaked music in the remarkable song *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu* [*Sri rāga*]. In *Koluvamare gada Kōdandapāni* [*Todi*], he prides himself on the singular fortune in offering specialized worship along with other *bhāgavatas*!

Is **family life** a blemish in the pursuit of salvation? Not at all, says he and he was himself in a family of thorns. with deep involvement. In song *Samsārulaite nēmayya* [*Sāvēri*], having said so, he adds a rider that such people should repose faith in God, join the *bhāgavatas* and dedicate all to Sri Hari playing vina in *rāga Sri*. But there is an essential Code of Conduct, like the General Clauses Act, to follow. That includes avoidance of violence to others, cordiality with *sādhus,* observance of *dhyāna,* doing *nāma saṅkīrtana,* etc. In essence it is just a well-regulated, moral life with faith in God. Our epics have held out the lives of Janaka, Vidura, Drona, Vasistha and scores of others while in recent past, one could point to the lives of Paramahamsa Sri Ramakrishna, Mahatma

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

ko [*Māyāmālavagaula*], he records his reverence of *nādōpāsakas*. Dr. Uma Roy, former President of CMANA of USA and Editor, *Sangeetham* [U.S.A.], once wrote an article stating that the alleged troubles and discords were fanciful creations of those who wanted to praise the bard at the expense of his brother by making the latter a villain. The brother was not perhaps of the type of Tyagaraja but need not have been vilified, she opined. Some songs of the bard have been held out to show such constraints in his life.

Convocation Address: Tyagaraja, being a born teacher, leaves no composition of his free from advice, criticism, admonition, lesson, etc. Take, for example, the song *Poddu Poyyeni Sri Ramuni* in *rāga Todi*. As all know, time fleets; time wasted is lost forever; opportunity comes but once; tomorrow is uncertain. Well-versed in *Vēdas, Śāstras, Purāṇas*, etc., he delivers, what is actually a convocation address relevant for all times. Says he:

'Man, consciously or otherwise, wastes time losing much of his life on– :

sleep, sensual enjoyment flattering others prompted by *adyātmikam, ādibhoutikam* and *ādhi daivikam,*

eating promiscuously whatever comes his way, anywhere, anytime like a vagrant bullock [figuratively called in Thanjavur delta as a *pattimādu*]devoid of self-respect idling away time,

sinking and floating in *samsāra* enticed by its lure and allure,

idle talks on all and sundry topics, a wasteful exercise,

ephemeral delight in the glory of wealth, status, lineage, etc.

['The blazing hearth and children running to lisp their sire's return.'

'The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power

And all that beauty, all that wealth ever gave...']

So goes on Thomas Gray who died when Tyagaraja was just four years old. How great minds react alike! Coming back to the address [?] of the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru, he recounts many more of wasteful practices of man, such as-

sorrow and vexation with disappointments,

jealousy at the prosperity of neighbours [*asuya*],

advancing age, loss of memory, senility, etc.,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

eagerness to do *yāgas,* but failure to perform with conscious conviction due to miserliness or greed as in the case of the delectable moral story of immortal cerebral child, Naciketas who was aghast at his father Uddalakar gifting away useless cows.

failure to enlighten oneself with the efficacy of *bhajan* and *nāma mahima* etc.,

The bard, like Adi Sankara in *Bhaja Gōvindam,* exhorts humanity, [to quote the memorable address of Swami Vivekananda,] to arise, awake and do *nāma saṅkirtan,* etc. with dedication, devotion and sincerity. His contemporary, Muthuswami Diksitar in his song *Māye twamyāhi* [*Taraṅgini*] appeals,

'Maya, pray leave me; desist from deluding me.
Devi, Thou art prayer-worthy; pray come, grant boons and protect me.'

In his song, *Hiraṇmayim Lakṣmim sadhā bhajāmi* [*Lalita*], he continues this trend and asserts that he would look to Goddess Laksmi only for help and never stoop to approach men of questionable means. The songs of the Trinity and such others constitute a treasure-house of noble thoughts and sayings which have eternal appeal and profound validity.

Nidhi cāla sukhama?

Ancients held out the view and stuck to it with singular faith, conviction and tenacity that knowledge, teaching, art, etc were not to be commercialized. *Manu Smṛti* mentions it. Other ancient lore emphasizes it. In the case of young Naciketas, Lord Yama promises many worldly things like long life, elephants, horses, gold, kingdom, celestial women, musical instruments and many more. But the *jñāna vṛddha* yearns for and opts only for the ethereal [Says he, 'O Lord, what you are willing to grant are all ephemeral. Let they be with you. **I want *śrēyas* and not *preyas.***'] The message of the story in *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is vital and is to be imbibed. Such software stories and legends were to promote spiritual and dharmic goals in the interests of the community, they urge. This view survives still here and there unsullied, even when the material lure, glare and value of money are well known.

Here is a differing note from *Al Risala* I-4 [New Delhi 110013]'which has a bearing on the theory of *nidhi cāla sukhama*:

'Umer had some official work done by Abu Ubaida Ibn Jarrah and afterwards sent him 1000 dinars. Abu Ubaida returned the sum saying that he had done the work for God's sake and not for Umer's and so, would not accept any recompense.

'Then Umer told him, "We used to be reluctant to accept the gifts the Prophet

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

would give us when he sent us off on some mission. But the prophet told us that we should accept them for they would help us in our religious and worldly affairs."

Hearing this Abu Ubaida agreed to accept the money.'

In this context, the philosophy expounded through the song of Sri Tyagaraja, *Nidhi cāla sukhama* may be viewed or reviewed. *Vide* Page 330 of *A Garland* for views on it.

Puzzling concepts on *Nāda*:

The under-mentioned songs of Tyagaraja present apparently differing origin of *nāda* as shown against each. **Can a musicologist or any scholar clarify,** requests E.N. Purushottaman at Hyderabad, a fanatic admirer of Tyagaraja.

a. Nāda tanum aniśam [*Chittaranjani*]	*Saptaswaras* are born of the five faces of Siva.
b. Mōkṣamugalada [*Saramati*]	*Praṇava nāda* was born of the union of oxygen and fire and burst into *sapta swaras*;
c. Swara rāga sudhā [Sankarābharanam]	*Nāda* is born in the *mūlādhāra cakra*;
d. Vararāgalaya [Chenchukambhoji]	*Nada* emanating from the human body is but the form of *Praṇava* and
e. Sobhillu saptaswara [Jaganmōhini]	*Saptaswaras* emanate from navel, heart, throat, etc.

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi has stated that the *swaras ri, ga, ma, dha, ni*, are *chala swaras* born of the five faces while the *swaras, sa* and *pa* are *achala swaras* without a beginning, original and immanent.

Nāda is omniscient which does not originate in anything or die. It is unborn, original, eternal, decayless and is not afflicted when its offshoots are afflicted. This is what the great Paramacharya has meant. Thus *Sa and Pa* constitute the *Nāda. Rāga*, on the otherhand, is inspired and born out of the boundless, all-absorbing, all-pervasive *nāda* when a phase of it [*nāda*] is taken and given a base with *ārōhana* and *avarōhana* , a shape [*swarupa*], a singular quality and power of appeal to the senses [*bhāva*]. *Nada* is the infinite, immeasurable ocean and *rāga* is the qualitative and quantitative part of it similar to the infinite space and that part of space impounded or to the waves and the ocean. So it is that

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

each *raga* is invested with a specific appeal and has earned the definition '*Ranjayati iti rāga*' [that which gives delight is *rāga*]. Each *rāga* is a coherant combination of notes invested with an individuality. It is a special melody mould, type and entity enjoying specific features, aesthetic sentiment and characteristics presenting a specific mood or feeling. [*Vide Yet Another Garland* pages 378-379]. *Nāda* is beyond such specifics, restraints and constraints. It is universal melody, the music of the infinite space *sans* qualitative and quantitative features. The word *Nāda* is presumably used in its fluid sense in some of the songs of Tyagaraja mentioned above where it is born of the infinite but has not yet assumed its individual shape as a *rāga* as if it is in the womb stage prior to 'quickening' Could *nāda* and *rāga* relatively compare with and correspond to the *advaitic* terms *Paramātma* and *Jīvātma*? Musicologists may explore. A rich field indeed!

***

Opera: *Nauka Caritramu* is a fascinating, conjuring extravaganza of an opera of his. It is as much the child of his prfound imagination as *Nandanār* is of Gopalakrishna Bharati. There are eloquent highlights of *śṛiṅgāra* v. *bhakti* in *Nauka Caritramu.* Few would expect of him the many conjuring episodes he brings out therein from a mind stoically soaked in devotion. There is precise geography from a mind which had not gone farther north than Tirupati and description of costumes from one who was immersed in asceticism in the South. He has a breath-taking originality and absolute knowledge of the minds and innocent chatter of young girls when they set out on an excursion, a pleasant blend of high wisdom, focus on stupid talks, etc.

Bhakta: Dr. T. Srinivasaraghavachariar summarises the characteristics of a *bhakta* as brought out by the bard. They are highly relevant to mankind of present days, though many would like to laud but not to own and practise them. The 'Do nots' listed out by him in *Sankarābharanam* [a magazine not the *rāga*] are:

a. Do not be vain that you are an adept in *japa* or *tapas;*
b. Do not be false to yourself
c. Do not wander to acquire name and fame;
d. Do not get steeped in attachment to kith and kin;
e. Do no think *samsāra* and *vichāra* as true;
f. Do not make distinction between Lords Siva and Madhava;

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

g. Do not proclaim that you are truth personified and gather livelihood by false pretensions;

h. Do not forget the feet of Sri Ramachandra even for a trice;

i. Do not indulge in anything that savours of *kāmyam;*

j. Do not acquire *rājasa* or *tāmasa guṇas;* and

k. Do not ignore or leave the path of *Rājayōga;*

These constitute the essence of *Bhagawad Gita.*

❋❋❋

Inspiration:

Tyagaraja was blest with a mind that was receptive and ready to absorb and sing *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu* to thank the sources. His songs are brimful of noble ideas and ideals, references and quotes, etc. from the songs, verses and features of his eminent predecesors and ancient lore. His advent and placement in life were such that such influences poured down on him like winter showers on him. Dr.V. Raghavan says that he had assimilated *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Ādhyātma Rāmayāṇa, Āndhra Bhāgavata,* teachings of Sridhara Venkatesa Ayyaval, Bodhendra Swamigal, Sadguruswamigal, Sadasiva Brhmendral as well as of Purandaradasa, Ramadasa, Kṣētrajña, Kanakadasa and others. 'That the songs of Tirtha Narayanaswami formed part of the music in which Tyagaraja's mind and imagination were soaked may be clearly seen."

a. *Girirājasutatanaya* [*Bangala*] is from the *mangala stotra* on Lord Ganesa in *Krishna Lila Taraṅgini.*

b. The phrase in *Rāgasudhārasa,'Yāga, yōga, tyāga, bhōga'* is drawn from Tirtha.

c. *Nikhila lōka nidāna* in Tyagaraja's *Sāranga* piece *Nīvāda nēgāna* is from the eleventh *Ānandabhairavi taraṅgam*

d. *Vinatasutavāhana* [*Jayantasena*] is akin to Tirtha's *Vinatasutaganavahana* in first *taraṅga* in *Sourāshtram.*

'A study of such echoes and evidences will only give us an idea of the way great minds and intellects grew and of what vitamin particles they gathered and fed themselves with. They can never belittle their greatness. Who understood, enjoyed or uśed Valmiki better than Kalidasa and who ever wrote like Kalidasa?' [Dr. V. Raghavan]

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'He deserves better', says N.Pattabhiraman [*Sruti*]:

'Tyagaraja was a great *mukta* and is generally praised as a poet and a philosopher as well; but his principal contribution was as a *vāggēyakāra*. He was a musical genius and it is his music that makes us remember him and adore him. Tyagaraja was a human being like us. What set him apart from most others was that he was a man of god and *nādōpāsaka*.

'He owned property and was concerned enough, to protect it, to file legal suits against encroachers. He undertook *uncchavṛitti* only as a *dharma*. He was blessed by and devoted to god but his musical accomplishments were his own **human** achievements. He had studied the science and art of music and his authoritative knowledge is reflected in his music. Through his *rāga* explorations and song structures, he expanded the basis and horizons of the art and actually revolutionized it.

'He was deified, initially by *harikatha* exponents [much more by his dedicated, devoted, ardent, admiring *siṣyas* - Author]. His image has been installed and is offered worship. This development reflects the ethos of hindus who worship humans like *mātā, pitā* and *guru*. But the issue is, "Are we paying enough attention to his music?"

'It would be in tune with our national character if we put him on a pedestal and then fail to give his priceless music the devotion it deserves. Tyagaraja deserves better.'

[Reference is solicited to the article in the *Fragrant Garland* wherein it has been elaborately shown how Tyagaraja was not only a saint *par excellence* but was also a poet *in excelcis,* that both had a common role but each had a distinct field and he played both well and true. Over emphasis on saintliness robs him of his eminence as a poet. And it is a loss to the nation, culture and art.]

***

Dr. L. Vaidyanathan - Music Director: [b. January 9, 1942]

Prof. Lakshminarayana Ayyar is a musically talented person of vast parts, who has shaped the lives and future of his sons, daughter and grand daughters in the musical sphere and all have become accredited musicians of repute. Violin is the sheet anchor of their intense, passionate musical expression and endeavours. Dr. L. Vaidyanathan, Dr. L. Subramaniam and Dr. L.Shankar constitute the Violin Trio and they have given concerts all over India, United States, Far East and many other countries accompanied on mridangam by the percussion colossus Palghat Mani Ayyar.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Place of birth	:	Aralay, North Jaffna, Sri Lanka
Father & *Guru*	:	Prof. Lakshminarayana Ayyar
Debut	:	At the age of eight

Vaidyanathan has provided accompaniment to top stalwarts in the Classical Carnatic field. His intuitive, research-oriented mind took up composing music in Carnatic and Western music and he has performed them with John Cooper on piano and Hinar Holm on cello. He has made bold experiments in orchestral music for films and has composed music for kannada, tamil, telugu, malayalam and hindi films in large numbers. Large numbers! These are days of statistics! figures? Well, here they are:

Kannada	[34]	Tamil	[16]
Telugu	[8]	Malayalam	[6]
Hindi	[4] etc.		

Several of them got him national or state awards. Some of them secured him the Awards for Best Music Director. Besides he has scored many others for films and television serials and albums. Is the recipient of many awards.

***

R. Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar – Vocalist/Harmonist: [b. November 1914]

Place of birth	:	Kollengode in Kerala
Parents	:	Ramakrishna Ayyar & Kaveri Ammal
Training in music under	:	Kollengode Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, a disciple of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar] for twelve years.

At the Gokulashtami Festival at Tiruvanthapuram in 1936, he gave **solo** harmonium recital with Thanu Bhagavatar on violin and Gopalakrishnan on mridangam [thelatter two being father and brother of Dr. T.K.Murti. There was music on his mother's side.] In fact, could anybody be named Kaveri, if she is not musical? His *guru* had been associated as a disciple with Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, a titan in the field. Bhagavatar learnt harmonium and has been training a large number of students initially at Chittoor and then at Tiruvanthapuram. Was a solo harmonist at the Broadcasting Station, Tiruvanthapuram upto 1950 and was later giving vocal concerts too. He had provided harmonium accompaniment

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

to important vocalists, vainikas, *bhāgavatas* and other musicians and has acted as judge at competitions. His name is synonymous with harmonium at Tiruvananthapuram!

***

Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar – A remarkable musical soul: [September 1, 1896 – October 16, 1974]

Four **portraits** [by courtesy of ***Sruti***] of the great vidwan crowned in 1951 as 'Sangita Kalanidhi' shall reveal the total Indianness of the musical soul that was Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, one of the top vocalists of the twentieth century. Simple in looks and attire, calm and happy in approach, enjoying a resonant, vibrant voice, god-fearing, solicitous to the young, Bhagavatar was popular. *Vide A Garland* for a full account of his life. The usually exacting standards of Dr. Veena Balachander applied to Bhagavatar brought out the following tribute in verse form

> 'His frank heart, bigger than his body, was as pure as his ringing voice [while a few others have tactfully cashed in, on all kinds of noice.]
> For impeccable character, honesty and nobility, he was the first choice,
> Who at others' fame and success, did surely exult and rejoice'.

It was all true. He was simple in looks and attire, smiling and gay always, enjoying the presence of youth and old and above all noble. In later life, he surrendered to Lord Guruvayurappa all surplus income after meeting his expenses in gratitude for His blessings. His voice would he heard in every corner of the music halls in pre-mike days. He was a violinist and was a duo with his brother Subramaniam till he went solo and reached the top Critic Subbudu humourously said, 'He appeared with shirt and upper cloth year before, with shirt only last year, now he comes without both. I shall not attend his concert next year as I am afraid how he would appear! [As *avadūta*?]. His voice was his asset and he was absolutely traditional at performances.

***

Dr. M.L. Vasantakumari – A Gem in the Lady Vocal Trinity: [July 3, 1928 - August 31, 1990]

Vasantakumari inherited the legacy of music from her musical parents. Mother Lalitangi, a disciple of Coimbatore Thayee, was a concert musician while father Ayyaswami Ayyar was a protege of Kothavasal Venkatarama Ayyar, eminent composer of varnams. Even as

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

a child, she recognized fundamentals. She had good exposure to hindustani music too. Her repertoire was extensive and she liked singing songs in different languages. B.V.K. Sastry mentions that **T.N. Rajaratinam, nagaswara maestro, once accompanied in a concert in** a mood of appreciation and regard when she was elaborating *rāga Tōdi,* which was considered his monopoly. *Swara* delineation and exposition was her favourite field of delight. She inherited the style of G.N. Balasubramanyam, her *guru* and polished it off like a jeweller with her own genius and made it her own. Many of the top lady vocalists and violinists have been brought to the fore by her magical *guruship.*

Probably her calm cultured demeanour, melodious and devoted rendition, understanding emphasis on *patāntara*, virtuous methodology and measured love and affection to an enterprising band of brilliant disciples as well as her passion for the songs of Purandaradasa, a family legacy, should have all qualified her for an early passport to reach the Lord! Many of her disciples are now in the top slots. She espoused many sacred causes like –

financial support to war-affected Indians in Malaysia,
donating her jewels for the defence of Bharat against the Chinese and
donating concert proceeds for Tamil Festival , colleges and building temples in Sri Lanka.

She had provided play-back music for numerous films of merit. Was honoured by the Government of India with Emeritus Fellowship in August 1984. Was immensely popular in many foreign lands. In those days of male chauvinism, maestro Palghat Mani Ayyar had provided mridangam accompaniment for her! Ill-health robbed much of her native charm and winsome music and the musical fraternity of one of the best of graceful artistes! *Vide A Garland* for fuller details.

***

Vasantamadhavi – Vocalist/Teacher: [b. April 20, 1947]

Starting early at the age of five, Vasantamadhavi had musical training for a decade and half under Gopalakrishna and D. Subbaramiah. Made her debut in the distinguished royal presence of Maharajah Jeyachamaraja Wodeyar of Mysore at the age of ten. She has been giving concerts on All India Radio and many other forums in and out of Karnataka and has directed many feature programmes for All India Radio and television. Her concerts have been well commented upon. A Bachelor of Science, she is well versed in sanskrit with a Kovida degree therein, besides kannada and telugu. This knowledge in linguistics, she has utilized in presenting many compositions like

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

varnams, navasandhi kriti, etc. Has been giving lecture-demonstrations, presenting papers and is a versatile musical person.

Institutions connected with	:	Founder & Principal, Raga Shree College of Music Founder & Managing Trustee, D. Subbaramiah Fine Arts Trust.
Cassettes	:	*Rāga Taraṅga & Sri Lalita Sahasranāma*
Compositions	:	*Navagraha kṛitis* on the model of Dikṣitar *kṛitis, Āshta Dikpālaka kṛitis.*

***

Vasudeva Kavi –Forgotten Composer of *Padams*: [c. 1684 - 1711]

The period of life indicated above virtually covers the reign of Sahaji Raja II of Thanjavur under whose patronage the eminent composer Vasudeva Kavi flourished and hence it should represent the peak period of his ascendancy. The illustrious composer has left 119 *padams* – 79 in tamil, about 10 in telugu and about 23 in sanskrit and 7 in *maṇipravāḷam* [macaronic]. The lyric enjoys clarity of ideas, felicity of language and intensive *bhāva-rasa*. A few are on gods but as many as 65 are on the ruler as *nāyaka* [hero]. With the poet, the self-imposed constraint on *narastuti* had not weighed much as the fire of *rāja bhakti* reigned supreme! Lyrical beauty and prosodic embellishments reveal that the poet was a master composer and musician, a scholar in languages and a resourceful *naṭṭuvanār* [dance master] at heart. [For a parallel, one may recapture the *tillanas* of maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman, as his *tillānas* successfully conjure up successive waves, images and portraits of dance poses [*adavus*], shapes and *bhāvas* in every phase and for every phrase.] Presumably they were dancers of repute in prior births at palaces, then prime centres of music and dance, havens of artistes, citadela of fragrant arts and unmatched patronage. The compositions of Kavi are profuse in the use of *chandams, jatis, ṣolkattus*, proverbs and simile, alliterations and *anu* and *antya prāṣas*. The composer availed of historical themes too and composed *varṇams* and *rāgamālikas* and *kāvyas* too. The Kavi had not recorded the names of *rāgas* or *tālas* for his compositions but had left it to the musician to adopt his own as the viable compositions lend themselves to such novelty.

A few of the songs are mentioned below:

Dēvi un pādam nambinēn – Anudinamum –[*Hamsadhwani*]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Vara vara en meyyal perugi [*Saveri*] –	–A case of *prositabhārtika nāyaki* to *sakhi*- [heroine to friend.]
Vāḍi vāḍi, muttamtāḍi [*Tōdi or Mukhāri*] –	[It is from an amiable – *anukūlya-nāyaka* to *nāyaki*]
Umakēṛṛa [*Begada*]	This is in *maṇipravāla* lyric as from *sakhi* to *nāyaka* pleading for the heroine
Sankarṣaṇa bhāva [Kambhoji]	*Swādinapatika* to ruler in sanskrit.
Manci manci [*Yedukulakambhoji*]	*Padam* for *kandita nāyaki* in telugu.

The manuscripts are all in the Saraswati Mahal Library, Thanjavur. Madhavi Rajagopalan of Bangalore brought to light these songs setting appropriate tunes to each, as well as the life of the composer. 79 songs in tamil have been brought to print by Saraswati Mahal Library.

❋❋❋

Mysore Vasudevacharya –A monumental musical personality: [May 28, 1865 - May 17, 1961]

In age, he was heading towards the coveted full century with lavish attainments. gathering ever fresh laurels and drawing respect. A complete musician, a versatile *vāggēyakāra* of absolute eminence, a *vidwan* of profound humility, he reached the top after a long, harsh apprenticeship. His apprenticeship under Veena Seshanna, commenced like a fiction after much importunity and unheard of trials and tribulationss, ended on a note of genuine appreciation. In his attempt to hear the uninhibited early morn practice of stalwart violinist, the Tirukkodikaval maestro, he drew the spittle on himself. His apprenticeship with Patnam Subramanya Ayyar was a lesson in itself on *gurukulavāsa*. – *Vide* pages 329-321 *Another Garland.*

One has to study them all for a full understanding of the patience, perseverance, hardships or sufferings one had to undergo to secure the *guru* - not a *guru* - in times past. One could also easily get convinced of the fact that the stories of Karna, Ekalavya and such others were not idle prattle for children. He was the link between the golden age of classicism and the succeeding age of musical effervescence. The very fact that Rukmini Devi Arundale inducted him into the Kalakshetra galaxy of preceptors like Tiger

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Varadachariar, Papanasam Sivan and Budalur gottuvadyam Krishnamurti Sastrigal is a clear indication of the rare honoured status he enjoyed even then. His songs are highly popular, rich in potential for captivating *prayōgas* and *sanchāras* and are in constant use – e.g.

Brōchēvārevārura	*Khamās*
Praṇamāmyaham	*Goula*
Māmavatu Sri	*Hindōlam*
Palukavdemira	*Dēvamanōhari*
Bhajarē rē	*Abheri*

This titan was Mysore Vasudevacharya, one of the finest of composer-musicians. So far as compositional skills are concerned, Vasudevacharya could be described as a *jñana vrddha,* since even as a child prodigy he exhibited his skill in musical composition. Noted musicologist B. V. K. Sastry writes:

'*Dwādasa Stōtra*, which he was reciting daily, was evidently the first tuned by him. *Chintayāmam Jānakikāntam* [*Māyamāḷavagauḷa*] was his first composition. *The Indian Music Journal* issue of 1911 had recorded that Vasudevacharya had composed *kirtanas* in both the systems of Indian music remarkable for the rare beauty of *rāgas* which enjoy full life. He considered, 'A mere assembly of words and tones could not be a composition. On the structural side, compositions should adhere to the principles of *prāsa, yati* and *antya*; The libretto should be simple and easy to render, use of *saṅgatis* economical. In our land, music is considered as sacred and a means to self-realization and communion with God. One becomes a *vāggēyakāra* by long devotion to music and leading a life full of experiences in the science and aesthetics of art that can inspire one's conception and crystallize them into composition.'

He conformed to Sarngdeva's dictum that one who blends successfully the *matu* [lyric] and the *dhatu* [tune] is a true *vāggēyakāra.* B.V.K. Sastry elicited the the following views of the Acharya:

Q. What is the criterion to classify a song as a good composition?

A. 'An ideal composition is a product of emotion and a picture of the visions arising out of rich and variegated musical experience... It should blossom out of the depths of the heart spontaneously, filled with rich melody and decorative effects born out of mature aesthetic judgment and inner judgment. Structurally it should adhere to *prasa, yati* and *antya*, the libretto being simple and easy to render. *Saṅgatis* are to be within limits and the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

rāgas chosen, if rare, should be such as to appeal to popular minds.'

***

Mavelikara K. Velukkutty Nair – Mridangist/Vocalist: [b. October 2, 1926]

Place of birth	:	Mavelikkara in Kerala
Parentage	:	S. Kumara Pillai, mridangist & Katyayani Amma
Training in percussion under	:	Father Sangita Kalanidhi Palghat T.S. Mani Ayyar for eight years. in *gurukulavāsa*
Training in music under	:	Kunnamangalam Velu Asan Prof. R. Prabhakara Varma
Debut	:	At Kandiyur at the age of eleven providing mridangam accompaniment to Veeramani Ayyar.
Posts held	:	Professor and Head of Department of Mridangam and retired in 1981. Member, Board of Examiners, Kerala and the Audition Committee, All India Radio.
Honours	:	Kerala Sangeet Nataka Academy Award 1981 Laya Vadya Praveena.-Kerala Fine Arts Society, Ernakulam 1988 Golden Jubilee Award from Sri Swati Tirunal Sangita Sabha 1992 Mridanga Ratnam by R.R. Kalakshetram, Guruvayur 1994 Gana Laya Visharat by Travancore Dewoswom Board 1994 Tulaseevanam Award 1996 Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy Fellowship 1998 Gayaka Ratnam by Sri Swati Tirunal Sangeetha Sabha 2000

Velukutty Nair has provided percussive accompaniment to most of the top artistes on All India Radio and elsewhere at many centres of the country with merit. As he is a vocalist

CC-0. In Public Domain. Panini Kanya Maha Vidyalaya Collection.

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

too, the vocal nuances find reflection in his technically sound percussion. Has participated in most of the major festivals of Kerala and helped Doordarshan to produce the documentary 'Art and Artistes' in 1990. Nair is among the prominent artistes of Kerala.

***

K. Venkatachalam – Violinist: [b. July 3, 1938]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvananthapuram
Parentage	:	K.V. Kesava Bhagavatar & Minakshi Ammal
Training in music	:	Father, a Professor of Music, S.S.T. College, Chalakudy Dr. N.S. Narayanaswamy
Post held	:	Staff Artiste, All India Radio till 31 07 1997
Honours	:	Felicitations in 1998 by Puducode Krishnamurti Trust.

***

Maestro Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu vs. the Familiar VIP!: [1893-1964]

Mysore Dusserah Cultural Festival was on. Prof. Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu was playing totally involved in music. [To those who may not remember, it may be mentioned that he lacked eye sight.] As usual, a minister presided over the function. Murmurs of the minister's talks disturbed the concentration of the learned maestro who was fully absorbed. Stopping his play, he said angrily,

'Who is making such noise. Keep quiet.'

Presenting an innocent face, the minister turned back to find some scape-goat to shout at. Alas, it was just a lifeless screen behind! He moved over to a safer place since a VIP has necessarily to be surrounded by groups of sycophants and he had to talk! Concert over, he reappeared and paid glowing tributes to the play which he did not hear!

–Source: Sangita Kalaratna B.V.K. Sastry.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Kanchipuram M.N. Venkatavaradan – An authority in Tamil *Paṇs [rāgas]*:

Kanchipuram is one of the ancient towns in South India and is also one of the five principal *peethams* established by Sri Adi Sankaracharya. It has been the centre of Saivite and Vaishnavite cultures and has temples which boast of architectural marvels. It is a seat of culture from time immemorial.

Venkatavaradan is a specialist in researches into tamil *paṇs* [*rāgas*] and has set to tunes thousands of *pāśurams* [hymns] and made them worthy of being sung at concerts. He was the head of the Isai Kalluri which functions under a trust. He is a qualified preceptor having undergone training. He has given lecture demonstrations on tamil *paṇs*. He was honoured by the former Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal with the title of *Tiruppāvai* Selvan. Another title he has been honoured with is Aruliceheyal Tilakam. He was also presented with K.K. Kothandaraman prize. He has trained many distinguished musicians like Sangita Kalanidhi Mani Krishnaswamy, K.J. Yesudas and Sudha Raghunathan.

❋❋❋

Atluri Venkateswara Rao – Mridangist:

[1910 - August 22, 1982]

The concert at Saraswati Gana Sabha, Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh was the turning point in the cultured artistic life of Venkateswara, then a lad of sixteen. He saw the percussive skill and artistry of maestro Palghat Mani Ayyar and surrendered heart and soul to become his ardent admirer and disciple instantaneously. It was *ātma nivēdan* to art and *guru*. The fact that the *guru* was junior to him in age by two years did not deter him and against the advice of elders, he joined the *guru* at his Kerala home and became his inseparable devotee. His reverence was so genuine, that he would not take a seat in his presence. An artiste of laudable principles, Rao would not accept any fee or honorarium except his salary from All India Radio. That was but a minor issue. The more relevant occurrence was that he went to All India Radio and expressed his wish to be removed from the panel of artistes when he felt that he was not able to please Muse due to infirmities of age. This, indeed, is extraordinary in a world where once in a panel, post or place, none walks out of it even under threats! His code of conduct was perfect and his percussive presentation brought out his mastery.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

M.S. Viswanatha Das – Patriot/ Dramatist: A Magnificent farewell:

A patriot to the core ever active during freedom movement, Viswanatha Das wore pure **khādi** cloth in pursuance of the call of Mahatma Gandhiji as a symbol of constructive patriotism and would sing patriotic songs while acting in dramas which would entail his being beaten by the ruthless cooly police brigades serving the alien ruler and arrested. On release he would sing again and the process would be repeated till the police wilted away.

[One could recollect, in this connection, Col O. Dyer most devilishly declaring that he fired as long as he had bullets left in his armoury at the innocent gathering at Jalianwallahbagh in the Punjab killing about three thousand innocents. Alas, how the country has fallen viewed against the sacrifices of countless freedom fighters who surrendered and sacrificed their all and remain unhonoured, unwept and unsung while pigmies are paraded and statues raised!]

Imprisonment deterred not Viswanatha Das. A staunch admirer and follower of Mahatma Gandhiji, his end was absolutely in tune with his musically turbulent and valiant dramatic life. He died while playing the role of Lord Muruga sitting on a peacock. What a glorious end? His funeral procession took place placing his body on that peacock itself followed by thousands of sorrowing mourners including stalwart patriot S. Satyamurti, born actor K.S. Anantanarayana Ayyar, melody queen K.B. Sundarambal and many other celebrities. A memorial too was raised. How the country has changed and how the youth is denied of knowledge of the glory of the Freedom Movement and the part music played in it?

Actors like him introduced **national themes** on every feasible occasion on the stage such as–

Madhavi in *Śilappadikāram* [II or VI century C.E.] would request her paramour, Kovalan to buy for her – not gold, not lipstick – but a **khādi** saree full of national emblem; and

Rukmini, Consort of Lord Kṛiṣṇa, would dilate deliberately on **khādi** cloth worn by her Lord finding fault that her wish for a particular **khādi** silk saree had not yet been fulfilled by HIM! [Spread of khādi – hand spun and hand woven cloth - as a symbol of economic resurgence -was one of the constructive programmes of Gandhiji.]

Dramas rose to dizzy heights of popularity. There were gate-crashing crowds and special trains too! Did not Subramania Bharati [in whose vision freedom had been won

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

already] sing with pulsating pathos-

'*Taṇṇīr viṭṭō vaḷartōm*?' [Did we nurture the plant of freedom with water?]

'*Kaṇṇīrāl kāthōm.*' [No, we saved it with tears!]

It was Golden Age II of India after the Guptan Age. All the air was pure, noble, gold and fragrant. Will Bharat ever re-experience it? It will! Surely the penance and sacrifices of great patriots and men of the armed forces to protect our borders shall not go in vain.

❋❋❋

S. Viswanathan:[Kumbakonam Brothers] – Musician: [c. January 14, 1920]

Sankaran and Viswanathan, called Kumbakonam Brothers, were presenting concerts between 1941 and 1983, in which year the elder passed away. The younger turned a teacher, painter and artist of multidimensional character. He taught many, he improvised a portable veena to make it respond to the constraints of modern travels but ensuring the resonant *nāda* and has been active in other fields too like tuning songs of Periaswami Thooran like *Tāyē Tripurasundari* [*Suddha Saveri*], *Gana Nātane* [*Saranga*] and *Annapūrnē* [*Pūrṇachandrika*]. The lyrical beauty of the songs and the lilting tunes are highly popular, a tribute both to Thooran and Viswanathan.

Kothavasal Venkatarama Ayyar, composer of the jewelled *varṇams* like *Sarasuda* [*Saveri*] and *Jalajākshi* [*Haṃsadhwani*] and a disciple of Veena Kuppa Ayyar, was grandfather. Viswanathan and brother had training under Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar and Umayalpuram Swaminatha Ayyar, both veteran *gurus* of lasting fame. Thus Viswanathan comes under the Tyagaraja *sisya parampara* [disciple line] both through his grandfather and through his *gurus – a saṅgamam* [confluence] in fact. The Brothers made their debut at the Music academy, Madras in 1941 and had given a large number of concerts. Viswanathan had served as teacher and Principal, Rasika Ranjani Sabha Music School for about four decades and a half. The Wallajahpet Literary Association had honoured the brothers with the title of 'Gana Kala Pravina' in 1947.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

R. Visweswaran–A multi-faceted Musical Soul: [b. May 9, 1944]

There is a natural charm in his personality and that charm [*bhavyam*] is born of a conscious cultured musical soul. He is the first without a second in the Classical Carnatic forum presenting instrumental music on santoor. He coaxes out of the instrument the needed melodic continuity that is *sine quo non* in classical *rāga*-based Carnatic or Hindustani music. He is a singer who provides the *sāhitya* and *saṅgita* leaving *nṛtya* to his celebrated spouse, Chitra Visweswaran of international reputation in all her dance performances. Thus the couple between themselves satisfy the definition *Gītam Vādyam thatha nṛtyam saṅgitam uccyatē.* Perhaps they are the only couple who could lay claim to the fullest application of the ancient definition. Even the celebrated Jayadeva-Padmavati couple are apt to envy them! He has a pleasant voice and his calm demeanour and presentation suit the needs of dance concerts. [The *rasika* may enjoy the dance supported by music and percussion; the percussionist may revel in his diverse presentation of varied *tīrmānams,* etc; but the singer has to repeat the same phrase *ad infinitum* till the dancer exhausts her varied *bhāva*-based alternatives or otherwise in *nṛtta* and *nṛtya.* Visweswaran is a match to all that! One could easily witness and hear the silent unheard whispers of the couple conversing musically on the stage:

"Nān pāduvadarkellām, nī āda vēndum; 'Oom!'
Nān āduvaderkellām neengal pāda vēndum! 'Oom, Oom'"

He is a vainika, a Western classical and Flamenco guitarist, etc. He is a composer of standing for dance dramas and thematic presentations for Chitra Visweswaran, etc. Composing and choreographing demand special expertise and talent apart from adventurous imagination and intuition and Visweswaran has the needed dimensions. He is indeed a multi-faceted musical personality of wide reach and a graded artiste with All India Radio. He has given quite a large number of santoor concerts. Plays santoor, guitar and vocal music for films. Has given numerous lecture demonstrations in and out of India and has given cassettes and C.Ds. [The month of May, in which he was born, is said to signify festivities, garlands and flowers. And this artiste-couple is a representative of that floating in the Ocean of Music and Dance.]

Place of birth	:	Chennai [Madras]
Parents	:	R. Ranganathan & Rajeswari Ranganathan
Academic Qualification	:	Bachelor of Commerce

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

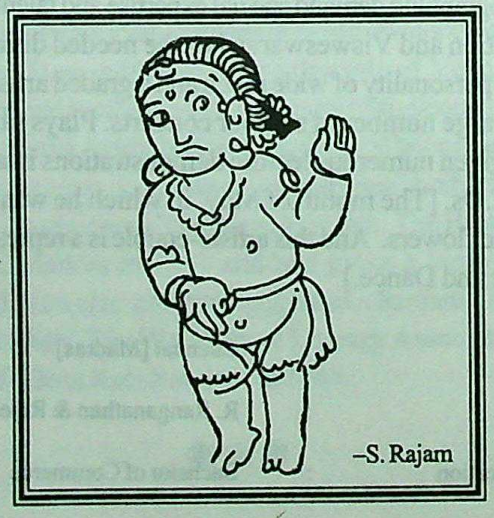
Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

		Licentiate in Teaching, Trinity College, London.
Musical heritage	:	Nephew of Sangita Kalanidhi G.N. Balasubramanian. Mother a musician.
Training in vocal music under	:	Mother & S. Kalyanaraman [Komal/Thanjavur]
Training in santoor [Hindustani]	:	Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma
Institution connected with	:	Director/Teacher Chidambaram Academy of Performing Arts, Chennai founded in 1975.
Foreign tours		With spouse and individually: The World except South America and Africa!

***

Arangēṛṛam [Debut]

Arangēṛṛam has become a costly venture quite beyond the reach of many talented deserving artistes passing out with merit and credit. It is also a fact that most of those who pass out have to go out of the field equipped with just an album to adorn their study or reception. The peak organization in the field of dance may well arrange for mass *arangetram* on the lines of mass marriages, mass *upanayanam*, etc., with the programme incorporating needed changes *mutatis mutandis*. This is vital in the interest of he trainees. Let them not be allowed to lose the satisfaction of graduation. *Arangetram* is also called *Ranga Pravesam* [debut].



CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IIB

The Professional Non-*rasika*

'The great change that has taken place today is the advent of the newspaper critic. An inevitable development, in fact. The critic listens from the very moment of the start not with the idea of enjoyment but with the painful task of what to write for the next morning paper! It is my contention that such a person is a professional non-*rasika* and he constitutes a potential danger to the prosperity of art. Unfortunately the prestige printed words commands endow their writings with an air of authority which they do not possess. The tendencies are to play safe, to offer a good word to all which indicate that all performances are better than what they were once. 'The most dangerous critic is the one who has a smattering of musical knowledge. He does not sit and listen. He floats about! He sprinkles his writings with a few technical phrases giving the critique a verisimilitude of erudition!...Criticism should be helpful, illustrative and constructive.'

– S.Y. Krishnaswamy

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Non Carnatic Maestros

Bhārat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar: Sitar Maestro:

[b. April 7, 1920]

Parents	:	Father Shyam Shankar, a scholarly Bengali and Bar at Law, who was Dewan of Jhalawar and Udaipur States in Rajasthan and Hemangini Devi.
Place of birth	:	Benares. [As father had left the post of Dewan and had remarried an English lady, Hemangini Devi and her children settled at Benares and Ravi Shankar was born there, the last of four brothers.]

Hemangini Devi, blest with a mellifluous voice, had the benefit of the rich musical and dance environment of the palace in the early part of her life and would sing songs once heard by her even long afterwards [*ēka santha grāhi*]. Ravi Shankar was inspired by her music. Says he, 'When she sang, I would be enthralled.'

There was a fragrant air of divine arts and culture in the family. Father was a multi-faceted personality – a poet, administrator and composer. His elder brother, Uday Shankar, though he sought to equip himself as a painter, became a dancer and rose up to the top echelons of dancers of the world thanks to the providential advent of Anna Pavlova early in his life and her well-meant advice to him and well-intended insistence to dig deep into the inexhaustible artistic treasure troves of Bharat lying hidden, rather than scout in wilderness angling for something which was not there. Brother Debendra was a dancer by conviction. Elder brother Rajendra, a vocal and instrumental prodigy, made his home throb with music even while young Ravi Shankar [then called Ravindra] drank deep the holy, legacy-rich waters of the Ganges, the ancient environment and culture of Bharat at Benaras in the impressionable tender years of his life. He could see his father quite late only at the age of eight. The mother and children left to fend for themselves had to suffer the pangs of chill penury not occasionally.

This drought happily was coming to an end and there were sure signs of a bright dawn, ensuing artistic affluence and attendant well-being when Uday Shankar returned from U.K. in 1929. Having switched over from painting to dance, he came on a mission to select and take back a team of select Indian dancers in traditional styles. In 1930, he left

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

for Europe with his mother and brothers. Ravi Shankar was then privileged to get a close view and experience of the tremendous toil and the magnificent grandeur of the work of his illustrious brother. Apart from copious music at home, Uday had collected a lavish variety of Indian and Asian instruments – string, percussion, etc. Ravi went to school for a brief while to learn French. Uday exercised remarkable influence in the development and progress of young Ravi then getting exposed fully to all the rehearsals at home. The economic drought and hardships undergone at Benares slowly gave way to an ocean of artistic affluence and attendant joy. Ravi travelled far and wide with Uday's troupe. He was exposed fully not only to the best in Western music but also to many of the maestros at Paris, enjoy the cultured environment, stylish life and freedom from wants. The stay at Paris opened his eyes to the power, glamour and appeal of the music of the West.

On the return of the family to India, Ravi had a four-month course with Kathakali maestro, Sankaran Nambudiri. How did he take to him? There rings the rising robust spirit of a youth destined to flower into an artiste who was to get the highest civilian award of Bharat. Says he:

> 'I had seen many dancers but none like him!
> To me, he was *sākṣāt* Siva Himself.' [*sākṣāt* = the exact, real]

Ravi Shankar had been initiated to be a dancer and had toured much with his talented, understanding brother in India and abroad. His heart was in dance and he excelled in it. In the troupe of Uday Shankar, there were the sarod master, Timir Baran, disciple of Allauddin Khan of Maihar, sitar expert Vishnudas Shirali and others, which helped Shankar to gather productive vision and enlightenment of instrumental music. Of course, Shankar was soon in classical music more by intuition than through practical classes. Musical environment at home, solicitude of a fond mother, understanding brothers and aunt as well as the sojourn at Benares while young had all suckled him with alluring pictures of the excellence of Indian music and dance. Fortunate to grow in this congenial art-affluent atmosphere, full of love, care and affection, Ravi Shankar's remarkable rise to the peak of fame was natural, smooth and graceful.

Uday Shankar's classical dance and image fueled Ravi's passion for the country. In his work, he records what only a true patriotic super artiste of the country could have felt:

> **'I really fell in love with India and its past.'**

This is genuine patriotism and innate first priority love. But it is interesting to know how he chose to fall in deep love with another, this time, Balasaraswati, the *bharatanāṭya* star:

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

> **'I found her fascinating and became friends with her immediately. In fact, I fell madly in love with her. I was only 14 [she was 18] but had the mind of an adult!'**

An honest confession in truth! The young mind had surrendered in its boundless passion for the beauty of art, artistic grace and artistic dignity of the other. Could anyone find fault with him?

There was yet another case, of a totally different type, of love, which was **reverence** indeed! In 1934, he saw Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and instantaneously fell in love with him enslaved by the grandeur and charm of his majestic personality.

> 'Not only did he have an imposing physical presence with his flowing beard but an aura too. My head went down automatically when I saw him. Once, Tagore was watching an opera; and believe me, try as I did, I could not see the programme myself that night as I kept on staring at him involuntarily throughout!'

There is yet another category of **love**, that is ***guru bhakti***, which comes up for special notice a little below. Of course, music had been the first and the most constant love from the start. [This series of love affairs may remind one of the epic hero, Rama, who fell in love, apart from Sita, successively with boatman Guha, monkey intellectual Hanuman, monkey chief Sugriva and demon prince Vibhishana.]

Man proposes but God disposes, runs the proverb. Uday thought of painting but became a star dancer of the world. In 1939, Ravi's initiation to learn under sitar maestro Enayat Khan, was arranged but it had to be cancelled as he fell ill. Ravi Shankar avers as only a true Indian could think so:

> 'I was not meant to become his disciple. 'We have a notion that if one is destined to be the disciple of a certain guru, it is impossible to change it!'

And he writes further:

> 'I was very much interested in dance at that time and had made great progress. I had no doubts about my fame and future career as a dancer. Sitar was only a kind of hobby. I considered myself as a dancer before all else.'

But dance was not to be his career and field of fame. What was destined came when he took to sitar and met Baba Allauddin Khan of Maihar at the All Bengal Music Conference. Baba took young Ravi as his ward and there ensued a saga of rigid discipline, strenuous tuition and non-stop practice at the home of the guru amidst spartan regimentation. Few stuck to the stifling, suffocating rigidity and harsh environment there but Ravi's destiny

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

fastened him with a golden chord [or, was it of steel?] to Baba. He reminisces:

> 'Sit down on a chair', he would say. The disciple had to decide the mode of compliance depending on the mood of the guru. If he was in bad temper and the poor, unsuspecting student sat on the chair, Baba would jump up and hit him with the top of the hookah and shout, "You think you are my equal".

Of course, Ravi Shankar got slowly used to the vagaries, trials and tribulations of this type of *gurukulavāsa*. He has given much insight in his autobiography '*My Music, My Life*'. Here are some:

> 'Baba was the humblest, gentlest person imaginable, filled with vinaya [humility]. But often, when he started teaching, he turned into a violent, irascible follower of Siva. At least thirty different boys came but none ever stayed longer than a week or ten days unable to bear his temper and discipline.'

> **'Once I was not able to play an exercise. "Go, you have no strength in those wrists", he cried as he smacked my hands. "Go, go, buy some bangles to wear on your wrists. You are like a weak little girl."**

Shattered and dismayed by the undue virulence, young Shankar left – not to buy bangles to carry out the mandate, but to bid *adieu* once for all to the training. Destiny lay in wait at the railway station to avert it in the shape of Baba's son, Ali Akbar, [now a world famous artiste], and bring the turbulent colt back to the stable! Says Shankar:

> 'Baba is a teacher in the old style demanding of the student absolute humility and surrender – a complete shedding of ego. The disciple is only a receiver; he must not judge or criticize the guru.'

Baba, of course, was rather kind to Shankar in his own way during the seven years of training and Shankar got married to Baba' daughter. ***Kanyā dān* had followed *Vidyā dān*!** Though Baba was immensely pleased to have the brahmin boy as son in law, the marriage did not last long. Perhaps this is the only case of love lost in his case.

Ravi Shankar had scored for top films, ballets, etc. as for *Pather Panchali* of Satyajit Ray and Attenborough's *Gāndhi*. Has composed and played fusion music with stalwarts. He pioneered orchestration of Indian music for All India Radio. Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan had performed sitar-sarod duets. Ravi Shankar has had many disciples and is now a world renowned sitar maestro honoured and respected in and out of India.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Honours:

Bhārat Ratna, the highest award of India for a civilian. Indeed, a magnificent honour!

[What a coveted merit it is to rank with the greatest and the mightiest among the leaders of this ancient nation! He deservedly ranks with the other **Ratnas** who adorn and enliven the glorious pages of Indian History in diverse fields]

Padma Vibhushan from the President of India.	
Doctorates [fourteen in number]	
Magsaysay Award	Grammys
Davos' Crystal Award	Fukuoka Grand Prize [Japan] and others.
Commandeur de la Legion d Honneur	Highest French Civilian Award (2000 C.E.)

"The country's art and culture have a bright future and would flourish well under the new generation. But as an old man, I would like to advise that they should not be in a hurry. We have to concentrate more on *sādhana* (devotion to music)" says Ravi Shankar.

✡ ✡ ✡

Yehudi Menuhin, world famous violin virtuoso, had special regard for Shankar, whom he called *guru*. Let us first recall the tribute paid by the *guru* to the *sisya* [disciple] as it is revealing and carries a message:

'It is a joy to see this superb musician shedding all his pride and awareness of self and accepting like a child or like a devoted student my teaching and music, though he is superior to me in age, experience and fame. After every rehearsal, he jumps up and embraces me. And I can feel how much love he has for our music. Since my childhood, he was my idol and hero and now, he calls me his *guru*! **I FIND** in Yehudi the inherent quality of *vinaya* [humility] and the desire to search for knowledge. Besides his fascination with our music, he is deeply interested in Indian philosophy and *yōga*. Has done a great deal to awaken in Western Classical musicians an intense curiosity about India's classical traditions. **He is an ideal example for all students all over the world!'**

Now what Yehudi Menuhin said of his *guru* may be seen:

'To the Indian quality of serenity, the Indian musician brings an exalted personal

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

expression of union with the Infinite. If the Indian musicians can help us to find this quality again, we shall have much to thank them for.'

'It is a tribute to our youth that many of them will forswear the easy and dangerous, the passive and destructive escape into the dream world of abandonment in order to choose discipline requiring years of perfection and refinement – a schooling as exacting as it is fulfilling.'

–[From the Introduction to *My Music, My Life.*]

✡ ✡ ✡

Yet another aspect of the life of Ravi Shankar is worth special mention here as it has a lesson for many and is of profound interest. Shankar's early advents in the West were not only not rosy but positively frustrating. Once he was on the verge of ending his life unable to face the crushing load of difficulties but Destiny lay in wait and intervened in the manner as it had done to many others in Bharat. How can a life be sniffed out when independent India was to crown him with the prestigious award of Bharat Ratna? [One may find a similarity of this incident with advents of seers and sages in the lives of great men resurrected in the *Garlands*]. Here is his account:

'Tat Baba entered my house quite by sudden impulse [as it appeared]. His very aspect moved me to tears and filled me with great peace. That evening I went and played for him. Inspired by his presence, I shed tears as I played. Baba himself was in trance. When he came out of it, he told me,

"Tests in life are sometimes extremely hard. None can stand up against them unless he is blessed with strength by his *guru*. Wipe away all your worries. You will be alright. Don't do anything foolish. Be manly and have patience..."

None had told the Baba that Shankar was on the verge of total collapse and suicide. Suddenly he appears from nowhere as a designated messenger with a mission, brings out the soulful but hidden devotion of Shankar, gets it washed with copious tears and warns him against committing that fatal mistake his mind was harbouring! **Any unbeliever who reads this real account from the life of a living maestro may turn out a new leaf in his life.**

Shankar says that there was an occurrence of Tat Baba coming to him as a parrot! This recalls an incident in the life of Saint Arunagirinathar of *Tiruppugaḻ* fame [in South India] where too a like occurrence had reportedly taken place. A convinced Ravi Shankar declares:

'Tat Baba is my only guru in spiritual matters.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

This, however, requires a spiritual base and bent of mind and he had it in abundance as is clear again from the following:

> **'Once, I remember, I experienced an ecstatic feeling of spiritual bliss when I played for the great [then] living saint, the Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetham. The saint remained lost in a trance like a statue.'**

The great maestro had drunk deep the spiritual and cultural waters of the Ganges and the artistic legacy of Bharat; had heard of the eminence of saints and seers – musical and spiritual – narrated to him by his fond mother as was once the practice in Bharat; had imbibed the best in the music of the East and the West, thanks to brother Uday Shankar; had trekked the hard path without demur till **success, glory and fame, which were earned and were his due**, crowned his memorable and illustrious life. Indeed it is a lesson to all. The Child of Varanasi, with seventy-nine years of impressionable and varied life, has a message to lovers of music. He speaks the language of our great sages:

> 'The true soul of music lies in its spiritual quality. But even in India, it is getting bulldozed by the new trend of loudness. Performers and listeners want excitement all the time.'

> 'With music, we should close our eyes, feel some pain in the heart; feel like praying and meditating. Not jumping to applaud!'

✡ ✡ ✡

Ludwig Van Beethoven – A Musical Symbol of Cerebral Excellence: [1770 – 1827]

A German composer of Flemish descent who spent his musical life mainly in what was then the Mecca of Western Music, Vienna. There was a blend of the Dutch and the German in parentage with his father and mother belonging to the two. Was born at Bonn in the Rhineland, junior to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart by fourteen years. [Syama Sastri of the Carnatic Classical Musical Trinity was then eight years old, Tyagaraja three and Muthuswami Diksitar was to appear six years later. Strangely Beethoven and Syama Sastri died in the same year, 1827. It was evidently a strange phenomenon, a musical evolution all over the world.]. He was sent, after initial training in music with his father, to Vienna, then the citadel of Western music. Gopalakrishna Bharati sang, *Tillai Veḷiḷē kalandukoṇḍāl avar, tirumbiyum varuvārō*! [Would anyone come back having diluted himself at Thillai, the abode of Cosmic Dancer, Nataraja?] And national poet Subramanya Bharati sang, *Veera sudandiram vēṇḍi niṇṟār pinnar vēṟondṟum koḷvārō*! [Will he,

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

having resolved to win the freedom of his country, entertain any other wish?] Mozart was there young but already a composer. When he heard Beethoven playing his piece he was visibly overwhelmed, hugged the prodigy, kissed him on both the cheeks and declared that the musical prophet of the future was he. Boyish words they were, but they proved true, as the world knows well.

Vienna was the seat of much of his musical activity. Beethoven had contributed much to the development of the symphony. Composed nine symphonies and an opera besides many pianoforte sonatas, string quartets, etc. He was mostly not rich and life was to him a continuing trial and burden. But it was out of the unfurnished, ill-fed, labyrinths of his musical intestines, his prodigious output came out. His life is yet another glorious example of poetic excellence and exuberance blossoming forth when the stomach was starved or half-starved. His brilliant life had met with two specific tragedies.

The **first one** was that he failed in his love of three ladies successively! This is indeed too harsh a fate for a musical soul with vision to contend with. There is a view that this had its impress on his compositions which flow with majestic slow serenity and pathos. Sure, this is discounted by many who, admitting his sad failures in personal life, would not like to attribute the slow movement and pathos-laden presentation to them. This is a matter not easy of any firm opinion. Muthuswamy Diksitar, a true *advaitin* [man of god] and married to two wives had met with no failures in his personal life to the knowledge of the world, but he chose to present the Carnatic world mostly with the finest of exemplary slow movement [*cauka kāla kritis*] *bhakti*-soaked compositions. Musiri Subramania Ayyar, a colossus among vocalists, whose life was a story of success, regaled the world with his slow rendition which remains unsurpassed yet. It was his genius that got wedded to that tempo. It is said that the slow tempo was close to Beethoven's heart even in the last phase of his that was full of success. That indicates that emotional upsets in personal life need not have been the deciding, commanding or compelling cause for his style.

The **second tragedy** was Beethoven's progressive loss of hearing with advancing age till he became stone deaf. The world had by then recognized him, his eminence established so well even earlier and his reputation full-well confirmed, that the infirmity could not touch the fringe of the fame. Actually he rose further in the estimation of music-lovers.

[Dr. Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu and Sarabha Sastri could not see the exultance and joy of appreciating *rasika* crowds but could hear it alright. They were divinely tuned to that inner vision but Beethoven, having lost successively in his love endeavours thrice, to lose his congenital love of the eternal sound [*nāda*] too was a heartless tragedy indeed. It robbed him of the satisfaction of hearing his pieces himself [*ātma tṛpti*] and take heart of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

how brilliantly he had conceived and presented them with immaculate perfection. Once, the last bar of the immortal Ninth Symphony [choral] was over and the entire house had risen giving him a thunderous applause. The Bard of Vienna blissfully heard it not and went on conducting! He had to be told of the end and only then he rose up to acknowledge the tumultuous greetings. How sad his *bhāva*-laden [emotion-packed] heart should have felt about the tragedy of his inability to hear what was earned and was given copiously. It is an intolerable emotional constraint for a master maestro to contend with and feel about.

✡ ✡ ✡

Yehudi Menuhin: World-renowned Musical Phenomenon: [April 22, 1916 – March 12, 1999]

Fabulously popular both in the West and the East, renowned as one of the foremost violinists and musical crusaders of the world and one who had abiding love and faith in the culture of India, Yehudi Menuhin has entered the effulgent pages of the History of Art. Born at New York of Russian and Jewish parents, he was a British citizen since 1985, knighted in 1987 and made a Life Peer as Baron Menuhin of Stoke d' Abernon, Surrey in 1993. His perfumed interests were varied, noble, eminently humane and *dharmic*. He had a school in England, an academy in Switzerland, took personal interest in different disciplines, causes and movements touching environment, alternative medicine, education, *yoga*, refugee rehabilitation and such others. Cosmopolitan in outlook, he remained neutral in many contentious issues but took active part in others where others faltered! He was an ambassador of music and relief to the suffering, a messenger of peace and amity, of understanding and reconciliation. The notorious massacre of demonstrators in Tianamen Square, China [which compares in a way with Jalianwalabagh massacre in the Punjab by the British in 1919] saw him cancel in protest his visit to China in 1989. He worked for the freedom of Soviet dissidents and black natives of South Africa. His espousal of such cases was born of firm moral conviction. He was an internationalist in every respect.

How violin came to play such an overwhelming role in his life carries a story of endearing love. Now a small diversion.

[A priest in Naraiyur village in Chola Desa entrusted the job of doing services in the temple one day to his young son. The good boy offered *neivedya* but God would not consume the food! The child got frightened as he feared that his father would scold him for cheating the Lord of His due. He cried and threatened the Almighty. Taking pity, God appeared and took the proffered food. In a mood of pleasant achievement and accomplishment, the child went home innocently unaware of being subjected to beating for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

consuming the entire food himself even on the first occasion of such entrustment. Beating was followed by recap of what took place. The earnest repentant father lauded the spiritual eminence of his child. Raja Raja Chola hailed the child as Nambiandar Nambi. This historic episode with a moral proved the innocence of the child and had a great impact in shaping the future of Nambi. Later the great ruler entrusted the codification of *Tēvāram* retrieved from the inner recesses of the temple at Chidambaram to Nambi, who codified them into twelve Sacred Hymn collections – *Panniru Tirumuṟaigal.*]

Now to young Menuhin. He had broken his toy violin as it would not sing! [It was not a case of Sambandar singing a song and Tiruneelakanta Yazhpanar not being able to bring it out on the harp or lute and in sheer disgust trying to break it! – *Vide Yet Another Garland*] The crying baby got the gift of a real violin instead! And that settled the direction in which he was to proceed.

Training & Ascent:

Menuhin had the opportunity of varied exposures and training. But the young prodigy enjoyed innate qualities of techniques, observation, assimilation and intuition. Fritz Kreister and Jacques Thibaud, both violinists, equipped him with artistry while young. At the tender age of seven, his lavish gifts and mastery came into evidence and he was virtually at the top. When he left off concerts in his seventies, he continued with teaching and conducting [which he had commenced in 1957]. He had watched San-Francisco Symphony. Had lessons with Signor Anker and Pesinger. With Romanian Georges Enescu and German Adolf Busch, he was under-study.

His debut on February 29, 1924 was a thriller. The audience was stunned and thrilled by the brilliant mastery and control over the bow. The performance at Berlin was so rich and captivating that Albert Einstein followed him to the backstage, hugged him and made his famous remark,

"Now I know there is a God in Heaven".

The purity of his eloquent play, arduous practice and unparalleled passion for perfection saw him being idolized the world over. What he said long back is full of wisdom:

> 'Violin made its own demands almost like a pagan goddess exacting a tribute.'
>
> 'We must preserve and restore all the values we hold in trust and every art, which brings dignity, nobility and serenity to the human being.'
>
> 'Music is the bridge between the abstract and the tangible, between imagination and reality.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Practice:

One sees sparks and identity of the spirit and wisdom of his views with those of Indian sages and seers. Verily the thoughts, action and speeches of the maestro have much in common with those of the East. He was an integrating factor in the field of art *sans* constraints and mental reservations on grounds of race, region or reason. In the history of vocalists and instrumentalists of India, how continuous and arduous training and practice have been stressed in the context of the *manōdharmic* basis of our music is well known. Here is a feature which accords with that, but, from the life of Menuhin:

> 'I can remember travelling to Washington for the matinee concert...I would scrape away. [At that time, I had yet to discover the value of the mute.] The rest of the passengers registered their annoyance, each coming in turn to knock furiously at the door [of the Pullman car]. I continued practising; but was uncomfortably aware that when the time arrived, I should have to emerge to the malevolent glances of those who had been suffering my music...
>
> 'But since practice I must, to mollify these antagonistic spirits, I played [at the end] with as much expression as I could muster, the *Ave Maria.* I was able to pass by now the beneficent glances of the powerful gentleman who no longer wished to stone me!'

One sees in this Menuhin's absolute faith and discipline in the matter of practice, his solicitude to the feelings of others and anxiety to mollify them and the knowledge of how to manage it – an incident in the art of management science indeed.

✡ ✡ ✡

Incidents

Two incidents wherein the titan violinist of the West met two virtuosos of the East are worth a mention. Former Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature, Madras, P V. Rajamannar secured the eminent violinist Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu from Visakhapaṭnam to hear the concert of Menuhin at the Musuem Theatre. On introduction, eminent Naidu expressed a wish to take a feel of the visitor's instrument. Menuhin declined but said that Naidu could 'see' it. A visibly upset Dwaram kept his cool. Justice Rajamannar arranged a reception to Menuhin with a concert of Dwaram. The visiting maestro was so charmed and enchanted by the rendition that taking the hands of Dwaram he confided:

> 'Marvellous, Professor. Yesterday I did not allow you to touch my violin.
> Please forget that. Now let us go to my suite.
> You can examine my instrument as you like.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

It had come from his heart. Perfect unison of majesty and purity of sound and *manōdharmic* magnificence of the music of the Sangita Kalanidhi enraptured and conquered the prodigy from the West so completely that he was gracious enough to admit and recognize the enormous eminence of his opposite. Dwaram took over the violin of the visitor and sent Menuhin lauding and applauding his music. It was a meet of two melodic souls from the two hemispheres of the globe!

The Edinburgh Festival, September 1965 was on. Violin wizard and eminent composer, Lalgudi Jayaraman was there. On the invitation of Menuhin, he visited his house but without his violin as the purpose of the invitation was not known. Menuhin requested Jayaraman to play his violin. Sure Menuhin was drenched by the copious melodic classical rains that descended from the Italian violin in Indian hands. The music was so excellent and absorbing that the enslaved host was visibly happy. Jayaraman also recalls the beauty and matchless timbre of Menuhin's violin play without mike.

✡ ✡ ✡

Menuhin was punctilious about physical fitness like a sportsman. His *yōga* teacher was P.K.S. Ayyangar, Pune to whom he presented a gold watch with the inscription 'To my *yōga* teacher'. Lalgudi Jayaraman states that during intervals, Menuhin would take to *yōga* exercises unlike most others. **'I stand on my head every morning.'** He conducted an orchestra while he was so and even conversed with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru **when both stood on their heads! The lure of the East and its undying message were well received by the musical crusader from the West.** It is receptivity, capability and willingness of the artiste to understand, accept and absorb the best in other systems that help to bring to play hidden virtues and values. Sir Edward Elgar hailed Menuhin as 'the perfect interpreter' of his concerts and 'the most wonderful artiste, I have ever heard'. Bela Bartok, famous Hungarian Composer wrote his last celebrated sonata for Menuhin.

The house of Menuhin was a Home of Melody with many on piano, dance and the like. His violin play was the *gāyaka* [vocal] style. His avarice to learn was proverbial and contagious.

Yehudi Menuhin's tribute to the 'Indian quality of serenity' and the 'Exalted personal expression of Union with the Infinite' needs special mention. **Said he, 'If the Indian musicians can help us to find this quality again, we shall have much to thank them for!'** This is not a wish but a command that is to be fulfilled. He strove for it and had shown the path.

Works:	Unfinished Journey	1977
	Six Lessons with Yehudi Menuhin	
	Theme and Variations	1972

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Awards:	Croix de Lorraine [from General de Gaulle]	
	Nehru Award	
	Gold Medal from Royal Philharmonic Society	
	Knight of the British Empire	1968
	Order of Merit	1987
	Life peer	1993

The matchless cosmopolitan outlook the wizard possessed found practical follow-up and implementation and his noble views found their rhythm in his actions. It could be asserted that in him *sangita* and *sāhitya* found their consanguinity and realized *adwaitic* integration. His life demonstrated how the famous saying 'East is East, West is West; Never the twain shall meet' is either wrong or has honorable exceptions. It is but proper to end this with the tribute of Bhārat Ratna Pandit Ravishankar to Menuhin :

> 'It is a joy to see this superb musician [Menuhin] shedding all his pride and awareness of self and accepting like a child or like a devoted student my teaching and my music, though he is superior to me in age, experience and fame. After every rehearsal, he jumps up and embraces me. I can feel how much love he has for our music. He calls me his *guru*. I find in Yehudi the inherent quality of *vinaya* [humility and affability]. Besides his fascination for our music, he is deeply interested in our philosophy and *yōga*. **He is the ideal model for students of music'**

✡ ✡ ✡

Sangit Samrat Tansen, the Immortal Musician: [1506 – 1589 or 1532 – 1595]

The Fragrant Garland [page 329] carries a note on the legendary life of Tansen. As Ravi Shankar remarks, 'Tansen's accomplishments and the force and the effect of his music prompted many stories about him – a conglomeration of historical facts and legends' [This has been true in respect of the lives of many celebrities, as weaving out stories has been the favourite hobby of fertile but innocent minds. They take a life as the apparatus and introduce different warps and wefts and weave out a story so alluringly that gullible minds which long for such satisfying food to quench cerebral inquisitive hunger gulp it down and spread it around with added ornamentation, configuration, colour and appeal. Twice repeated, the myth gathers sanctity.] The currency of legends, of course, is itself a tribute to the eminence of the man!

Ramtanu, son of a brahmin, was not a bright lad but could mimic any sound. Once he terrified the entourage of Swami Haridas by mimicking the roar of a tiger. Swamiji, struck

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

by his talents, took him as a disciple. After ten years with him, Ramtanu joined the Court of Rani Mrignaini, widow of Raja Man Singh of Gwalior and chose to fall in love with a muslim girl. To marry her, he became a convert assuming the name of Ata Mohammad Khan. He inherited fortune and acquired powers of *yōga* and *sufi* mysticism. After service in the Rewa Court, he became Chief Musician in the Court of Akbar who invested him with the title of Mian Tan Sen. Many *ragas* lend legendary eminence to him like *Mian ki Malhar, Mian ki Todi* and *Mian ki Sarang*.

[There is a view that Tansen's alleged connection with Swami Haridas is itself a myth.]

His son Bilas Khan started the *Bababiya gharana* and the family of his daughter, Saraswati who married Misri Sing, who on conversion became Nabat Khan, oriented the *Beenkar gharana*, named after the instrument Been.

✡ ✡ ✡

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan – Sarod legend:

Sarod is an instrument that has been undergoing 'metamorphosis having transformed itself into a majestic instrument capable of producing a wide, delectable range of sounds from the most tender of *meends* [glides and slides] to thunderous, lightening speed *tans* [musical sentences]'. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan is among the greatest of artistes and the reigning sarod player belonging to the Senia Bangash Gharana tracing its lineage to Tansen. Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan was his father and *guru*. Born at Gwalior, Amjad Ali Khan inherited his love of the instrument from his father and preceptor. His ancestral home is called Sarod Ghar [a museum of music]. He is a calm, dedicated artiste enjoying the fruits of his deep commitment to music and the instrument. He has carried out improvements to sarod to make its sound sweeter to convey melodic emotions, preserve purity of sounds and present the *gāyaki* style of performance by eliminating sonorous and staccato sounding techniques resorted to by others.

Khan wonders why the Tansen Festival should be run at Gwalior with government funds alone when the Tyagaraja Festival at Tiruvaiyaru is run grandly without any government aid. [That is indeed a tribute to the musicians and the lay of the South and their commitment and love of the great composer.]

Ustad Zakir Hussain tabla wizard and others take delight to play for the sarod maestro. Amaan and Ayaan, his sons, and many others have been trained by Amjad Ali Khan to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

keep up the great heritage. He performs with his sons too in India and abroad as Trio. This indicates that the great tradition is being properly cared for and provided with successive waves of artistes if and when Khan wants to delegate or legate. He runs workshops for the benefit of aspiring youth. He feels, 'Instant entertainment, popular and loud music with a definite Western influence will have attraction but that does not mean that the connoisseur of classical music will fade into background. Music is a gift of God and listening to music and appreciation are essential for our system. Appreciation and enjoyment do not call for understanding the intricacies. After all any music from any part of the world is based only on the seven notes! Music as such is neither cheap, devotional or sacred. The aim of my life is to protect the purity of our *rāgas* and *tālas*. The audience too should respect and maintain discipline.'

Titles and Honours:
Padma Sri from the President of India
Padma Bhushan from the President of India.
Tansen Samman
Kala Ratna, UNESCO Award, etc.

✡ ✡ ✡

Pandit Jasraj- Vocal Maestro:

Pandit Jasraj is one of the stalwarts of the Mewati Gharana and is a well-known, popular vocalist. He hails from a family of musicians and learnt music from his father Pandit Motiramji and later from brother Pandit Maniramji. Initially he played tabla and then switched over to music. He believes, unlike Ustad Vilayat Khan, that informing the audience of the *rāga* helps better appreciation. He has proudly mentioned that at Patna, twice the audience was a massive hundred thousand!

He is blest with a soulful and sonorous voice, which negotiates the three octaves with felicity. 'His rendition is characterized by a harmonious blend of the austere and the opulent elements, projecting traditional music as an intense spiritual expression, at once chaste and densely coloured.' His music is soulful and emotionally appealing. He views that **'rap, rock and pop music are but schools from which listeners get graduated to listen to us, who are universities!'** He expects students of music to excel their preceptors and visualises the same from his own. This is a highly progressive view which is vital to the development of the art. Lest it should degenerate into *status quo ante!*

There are Jasraj School of Music Foundation, Vancouver and Jasraj Academy of Music, New Jersey run in his honour. Has been honoured with a number of awards including:

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Padma Bhushan from the President of India
Sangeet Natak Akademy Award, New Delhi
Institution of a scholarship in his honour in the University of Toranto for Canadians studying Indian music.
Naming a concert hall [auditorium] of the Vedic Heritage in New York after him.
Instituting an award after his name – Pandit Jasraj Award.

✡ ✡ ✡

Pandit Hari Prasad Chourasia – Flautist:

A prominent flautist of All India fame, one is daily reminded of Hari Prasad Chourasia and his august presence with his sweet play on flute on Doordarshan. He had his training in flute from Pandit Rajaram and Pandit Bholanath as well as from Smt Annapurna Devi. Concentrated practice, innovative presentation and inspired play have endeared him to the music-loving people. He has evolved his own style of blowing and fingering techniques to present conjuring melody in *alap*.

✡ ✡ ✡

D.L. Sumitra Guha –Vocalist:

Sumitra Guha hails from a family of musicians of Andhra Pradesh and was initiated into Carnatic music by her mother, Rajyalakshmi Raju. Later she underwent training under Prof. S.R. Janakiraman, a prominent vocalist and musicologist who has spent much of his years in teaching. Sumitra Guha later came under the tutelage of Pandit A. Kanan and Smt. Malavika Kanan at Calcutta. Enjoys a soulful voice and is a popular vocalist. Her rendition bears the marks of purity of *rāga* and pleasing presentation.

✡ ✡ ✡

Gangubai Hangel - '*Sadhana* to Success'; [b, 1913]

Parents	:	Ambhabai, a Carnatic musician and Chikkarao Nadgir. Grandmother, Kamalabai was also a Carnatic musician.
Initial training in Carnatic music	:	With her mother
Training in Hindustani music	:	Rambhau Kundgolkar @ Sawai Gandharva
Professional concerts started in	:	April, 1930

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Honours	:	Padma Bhushan from the President of India Sangit Natak Akademy Award

Gandhari was her initial name. The family belonged to the professional entertainer class. Father, a brahmin, was patron-benefactor. Circumstances of parentage had its initial drawbacks in the blossoming of her artistic life. The family heritage of Carnatic music did not find favour with the girl and she was introduced to Sawai Gandharva for training. Bhimsen Joshi was a student-mate there in *gurukulavāsa*. The *guru* was strict and exacting in imparting lessons both to Joshi and her. [It was generally so and the dictum 'Slow and steady wins the race' weighed with them.] She was 'entrusted' to her master [*yejamān*] at the age of sixteen but he died when she was in her twenties. She has confessed that whenever she sat for concerts, reminiscences of her painful life - of course, long back - would crowd her mind so intensively that she would even weep. She persevered with her *riyaz* with a will to succeed and did succeed with honours. In this her initial life was perhaps more painful that her counterparts elsewhere who rose from rags to riches, fame and name. Her mother and uncle stood by her.

Initially she got some recording contracts and some performances and from 1930 her stars began to shed lustre. *Sruti* magazine records that she kept up the purity of khayal gayaki of the Kirana gharana out of sheer conviction not to dilute standards of her art and is ranked with Hirabai Barodekar and Roshanara Begum.

She has a voice that is powerful and sonorous and her rendition is full-throated in conformity with the criterion that true music shall emanate and pass through *nābhi, hṛt, kaṇṭa, rasana – vide Sobhillu saptaswara* of Sri Tyagaraja in *rāga Jaganmōhini.* She has been honoured by many forums and has made foreign concert visits. Her life is a model of hard practice, perseverance, purity of traditional style and excellence in art.

✡ ✡ ✡

Vinayak Rao Patwardhan –Vocalist, Teacher, Dramatist: [July 22, 1898 – August 23, 1975]

Place of birth	:	Miraj, Maharashtra State [Was born on the day of Vinayaka Chaturti. Hence he was christened after the most favoured popular deity of Maharashtra.]
Name of father	:	Narayan Rao. [Both the parents passed away in about 1902]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Family background in music	:	Paternal uncles were teachers in packawaj and music in different schools. Vinayak Rao started learning music at the latter's school called Ganesh Sangeet Vidyalaya in 1905.
Qualification	:	Sangita Praveen from Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya, Mumbhai in 1919.
Had training in music under	:	Keshavarao Patwardhan, uncle, initially Vishnu Digambar Paluskar at Maha Vidyalaya Balakrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjikar Rahmat Khan, Court singer in Gwalior gharana Ramakrishnabuwavaze
Teaching assignments.	:	Commenced teaching junior students even as he learnt. At the age of 16, was a teacher at Miraj in his old Alma Mater. [It is interesting to note that Prof. B.R. Deodhar after whom a cricket trophy had been created for inter-state cricket was among students then.] Was Principal, Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya during 1921-22. Founded Vishnu Digambar Maha Vidyalaya, Pune and taught there. Founded Vishnu Digambar Smarak Mandir to provide a platform for musicians.
Books authored	:	*Nātya Saṅgeet Prakāsh, Rāga Vigyān, Mahārāshtra Saṅgeet Prakāsh, Maajhey Gurucharitra, Saleya Bālasaṅgeet Bāla Saṅgeet, Tabla Mṛidanga Vadana Paddhati*
Concert, lec-dem tours abroad	:	Nepal and East Europe
Cassettes	:	Both in classical music and film songs.
Honours & Titles	:	Pune Corporaion special reception 1958 Fellowship, Sangeet Natak Akademy 1965 SurVilas from Sur Singar Samsad 1971-72 Padma Bhushan from President 1972 Gwalior Municipality Special reception 1973

Vishnu Digambar Paluskar selected Vinayak Rao and admitted him into his Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya, Lahore. The ruler of Miraj granted him a stipend of rupees sixteen per month, which was indeed a sizeable sum then. In August, he was shifted to the newly

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

founded Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya at Mumbhai where he continued till 1914. The *gurukulavāsa* environment pervaded the institutions and V. D. Paluskar would himself teach students between 10 p.m. to 12. Paluskar [1872-1931] was a devoted, dynamic crusader who had achieved wonderful things for the propagation and popularity of Hindustani music. The initial association with such a master, the decade-long attendance as tambura player to *gurus* Rahmat Khan and Balakrishnabuwa and his own innate urges and aspirations, dedication and discipline moulded Vinayak Rao into a magnificent singer of the Gwalior gharana. Once a musician, always a musician and the decades of dedication could not be a passing experience. Classical music was his wedded art and he strayed from it never. He had given over a thousand concerts, had sung before Gandhiji and had presented numerous disciples of repute. He had the happy blend of a born teacher and a concert musician. A multi-faceted artiste, he could play violin, taar shenai. sitar, jalatarang and tabla. Was a bhajan singer too. Then what is left for him?

He was a dramatist chosen to co-act with the famous Bal Gandharva in heroine role in the dramas of Gandharva Natak Mandali for a decade. Paluskar, his mentor, was against his joining the stage for its possible corrupting influences on character and habits. But Vinayak Rao was a rock against such polluting factors to the last and returned to his mentor and pacified him. He did not desist from giving concerts during this period too. It was a period when music reigned and ruled the stage and people frequented dramas to hear live songs.

A multi-faceted musical soul, he sought to present marathi compositions to popularize music in Maharashtra.. He is one of the rarest breed of musicians who cared for personal health and body-building! He acted as hero in the film, Madhuri in 1972. His life started in music and it was music all through. A dedicated good artiste, teacher, promoter, actor and disciplinarian, he was a good man.

Here is clarion call by St. Tyagaraja in *Sri Gaṇapatini* (*Sowrāṣṭram*):

"Having accepted the worship of Brahma, etc. and partaking of the offerings, with the holy feet of Hari firmly installed in his heart, here comes Sri Ganpati with heavy steps resounding with *'gallu, galla'* sounds set to dancing many *gatis* (rhythms). Oh men of devotion! Adore Him!"

This salutation is to the 'Great Remover of Obstacles', Nṛitya Gaṇapati.

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IIC

Programme Menu for performances

Institutions, *gurus* and trainees do take years and months of rigorous practice and bestow considerable thought and attention to every aspect of bharatanāṭyam before turning over to recitals. Audience, occasion, forum, atmosphere, acoustics, time allotted and everything else may vary, even as marriages vary such as *gāndarva*, *swayamvara*, five day and one day marriages, registration marriages, etc., Sport events are cut down to lesser number of bowling overs or sets. The recitals too undergo the needed changes by inclusion or omission of some *padams, etc.*, which is apt to deprive *rasikas* of items which could gladden their hearts. Instead of pruning entire items, perhaps, pruning the number of *charanas* or *sanchāris* in specific songs wherever feasible could be considered. Thus there could be 'A' category programme for full-fledged performances [full meal category] and a pruned 'B' category programme [limited meal category] for other performances. The conductors and artistes can easily switch over from A to B and *vice versa*. This may help in providing *rasikas* with more items. There could be no difficulty in this. Maybe considered.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Maestros in *Bharatanāṭyam*

Note: This ***Garland*** series was originally conceived to cover only the lives of musicians, musicologists, etc. Recently it was suggested that dancers should also be included in conformity with the ancient definition of *saṅgitam*. This was taken into account and some lives find place herein besides a general article on bharatanatya in Part I. A **comprehensive coverage may be undertaken later, which is worth the exercise.**

Anjali [Dr. Anne-Marie Gaston]

– 'She came and was conquered!'

Annie Besant [1847-1933] appeared on Indian scene to give a flying start to the appreciation of the spiritual wealth and artistic grandeur of Bharat by the West. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky [1831-1891] founded the Theosophical Society which helped to shed light on the application and messaage of Indian philosophy, etc. through Annie Besant and others. Anna Marveevna Pavlova [1885-1931], Russian ballerina, inspired Rukmini Devi and Uday Shankar to dig deep the hidden treasures of Indian arts and the world stood to immense gain thereby. Foreign artistes began to generate and entertain interest and appreciate the magnificence of Indian dances and their enthralling themes and source materials drawn from epics, *purāṇas* and literature. Many foreign art-loving men and women have in recent decades taken to Indian dances bridging in a way the East-West divide and demonstrate the fact that arts can have no eternal barriers.

Anne Marie Gaston, popularly called **Anjali** [meaning dedication], is one of the crusaders from the West. She is an internationally recognized artiste in *bharatanāṭya* as well as in Odissi, etc., besides being a choreographer of standing. The very name she assumed connotes the amaranthine culture of the artiste in the context of the country she espoused for her artistic efflorescence. She is a M. Litt., D.Phil. of the Oxford University and is an elected member of the Royal Asiatic Society. She spent a decade in meeting artistes and scholars, musicologists and danseologists, studying and practising the diverse intrinsic aspects of *bharatanāṭyam, odissi, kuchipuḍi, kathakali* and *mōhiniyāttam*. She learnt the arts under the pick of learned preceptors like –

Ellappa Pillai, Kiranur Govindarajan, Balakrishna,
Padmasri Kelucharan Mahapatra,
Hari Krishna Behar, etc.

Anjali, a creative genius without doubt, with dynamic enthusiasm and an irrepressible research-oriented mind, selected ancient religious and spiritual themes in Hinduism for her

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

training and recitals such as –

Avatār and Incarnation — *Manifestations of Śiva*
Kṛiṣṇa's musicians — *Paśupati, Lord of Animals* and
Visions of the Feminine and many more.

'*Śiva in Dance, Myth and Iconography*', which was the theme of her thesis for Oxford University, has undergone repeated editions. She specialized in Hindu dances, sculpture and themes and has been giving lecture-demonstrations and conducting courses too. If Annie Besant [1847-1933], President of the Indian National Congress in 1917, absorbed and expounded the spirit of Hinduism, the arts of Bharat as well as the resurgent national aspiration for freedom, Anjali devoted her impressionable life to qualify and function competently as an ambassador of the cultured, soul-filling arts of Bharat. She has toured many countries to scatter the perfumes she had gathered in the gardens of Bharat.

[**Note:** It is but proper to record that she purchased the proof copy of the first volume, *A Garland,* even before printing could be done and the book released.]

✡ ✡ ✡

Dr. T. Balasaraswati – *Abhinaya* Maestro – [May 12, 1918 – February 9, 1984]

Another Garland [pages 104-5] presents a life picture of the pioneering *bharatanāṭya* and *abhinaya* artiste of fabulous fame, Balasaraswati. It may be taken as part of this. There was surfeiting music – vocal and instrumental – at home and naturally she drank it to the full. Her ancestor Kamakshi was a *sadir* artiste. Grandmother Dhanammal was a legendary veena artiste. Mother Jayammal was a Carnatic musician who suckled her child with the milk of classical music from childhood. Brother Ranganathan was a percussionist. Another brother T. Viswanathan [Wesleyan University], now a Sangita Kalanidhi, is a flautist of repute. Mylapore Gowri Ammal, the dancer, was a close friend of the family. Thus Jayammal's music, Viswa's flute, Ranganathan's percussion, besides N. Radhakrishnan's clarinet and K. Ganeshan's *naṭṭuvāṅgam* provided a permanent ensemble to accompany Balasaraswati at her recitals. The efflorescence of arts, the rejuvenation to creativity provided by the Freedom Movement and the musical environment at home and outside synchronized to present her natural talents with the best opportunity to blossom up. She had her debut [*araṅgeṭram*] at the age of seven at Kanchi. She became a national celebrity within a decade thereafter. Success leads to success and she had the backing of a family of artistes which few others could boast of.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Health problems restricted her activity to some extent at the close of the third decade of the century. *Abhinaya* was her forte. She was then teaching at the Music Academy, Madras. The meeting with Martha Graham, a modern dancer of stature, and the demonstration Bala presented for her were the turning points in her career. The brilliance of the art, her exquisite technical artistry stole the heart of the artiste from the West, who with a hearty embrace exclaimed,

> 'How could you be hiding in this place while the rest of the world knows so little about you. I am going to carry you off!'

Of course, she could not as the celebrated Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan had arranged for Bala to present her art at the Metropolitan Festival Hall, Tokyo in 1961 and Bala was forty-three! She visited United States in 1962 and was appointed as Artist-in-Residence, Wesleyan University. United States soon became a second home for Balasaraswati and some members of her family of artistes. In 1963 she was at the Edinburgh Festival. The world took full notice of her beguiling native artistry, the charm of her aesthetic art, the repertoire for which included:

> *Alārippu* [*tiśram, chaturaśram, khandam, miśram* and *saṅkirṇam*]
> *Jatiswaram* – nine [in six different *tālas*]
> *Sabdam* [8], *varṇam* [13], *padam* [97], *jāvali* [51] and *tillāna* [8]

A. Ranganathan, who provided the details of her repertoire, mentions some incidents to indicate her character to make amends readily to ensure perfection.

1. In dance, the mridangist's calculated stroke play, the dancer's feet movements and the musician's song all synchronize lest there should be derailment. Once, T. Kuppuswami was on mridangam, when the right side [perhaps the more important part of it] broke! Most cleverly Bala continued till replacement of the instrument took place [A lesser intelligent artiste would have cried 'halt' as if rhythm is sourced by the instrument!]

2. It was a complicated *tirmanam* in *Huseni swarajati*. Her beat missed the ordained beat as reflected by the mridangist just by the split second, or by the slightest ray of the nose if the idiom of the race course could be borrowed. [Some artistes may choose to stare at the percussionist as if he had tilted the rhythm cart - for the consumption of rasikas and critics.) Bala chose to redo it and kept the time and beat exquisitely. Her sense of rhythm and code of conduct were revealed in that act.

How she had exquisitely described and compared the various items of a dance recital

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

with the entry of the *bhakta* into a temple from the corridors to the sanctum, taking the Brhadiswara Temple at Thanjavur into account, has been described in the *Fragrant Garland* [pages 64-66] captioned *Śṛiṅgāra is Bhakti in Dance – Bālasaraswati speaks.*

[To the honours listed in *Another Garland*, may be added *Isai Perarigñar* from Tamil Isai Sangham and Sangita Kalasikhamani from Indian Fine arts Society.]

✡ ✡ ✡

Chitra Visweswaran – Finest Exponent of *Bharatanātyam*: [b.October 12, 1950]

The finest of fine cerebral arts is positively *bharatanātyam* as it is the exalted confluence of exhilarating music, reverberating rhythm, highest expression of *bhāva-rasa* and chaste *abhinaya.* The Renaissance in Dance commenced with the advent of E. Krishna Ayyar, Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra, Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai, Vazhuvur Ramiah Pillai and others. Chitra Visweswaran is among the most popular top artistes of the resurgent art who have been spreading the perfume of the art far and wide. Of course, she took to *bharatanātyam* after a circuitous journey through Manipuri, Kathak, Western ballet and contemporary dance that was at once refreshing and educating. One sees subtle glimpses of those graces nourishing and enriching her presentation. These qualifying rounds she had undergone enable her to transcend barriers of musical systems and linguistic styles .

Place of birth	:	Tiruchirapalli
Parents	:	N. Padmanabhan and Rukmani, a dancer, veena artiste and dramatist.
Spouse	:	R. Visweswaran, santur vidwan
Academic Qualification	:	B.A. [Hons.] in literature
Training in dance under	:	T.A. Rajalakshmi of Tiruvidaimarudur, at Calcutta [both *naṭṭuvāṅigam* and dance) 1959-1970 Vazhuvur Ramayya Pillai [1970-1974] as a Government of India Scholar. [advanced study in *bharatanātyam*].

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Debut on	:	April 12, 1962
Concert tours abroad	:	Europe, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, etc. [All continents except South America and Africa]
Institution founded	:	'Chidambaram Academy of Performing Arts'
Honours, Awards and Titles	:	Nṛtya Chudāmaṇi from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha 1980 Kalaimamani from Government of Tamil Nadu 1982 Central Sangit Nataka Akademy Award 1987 Nṛtya Vilas by Sur Singar Samsad, Mumbai 1988 Padma Sri by President of India 1992 Manav Seva Puraskar by the Institute of Economic Studies 1992 Sri Ratna by Chennai Institution 1998
Other activities	:	Convenor, Naya Kala Conferences, 1996/1997 Trustee, Indian Foundation for the Art (Ford Foundation) Professor Emeritus, Madras University. Member, Central Sangit Natak Akademy.

Art without beauty is inconceivable. God-given beauty is *sine quo non* to be a successful dancer and He has endowed Chitra Visweswaran with just that - dove-eyes, elegant personality, expressive beauty, pliant form and stature that conduce one to reach the Alpine peaks in the artistic ranges of *bharatanāṭyam*. Crisp mobility, graceful movements [*adavus*], agility, balanced stage coverage and exquisite *nṛitta* and *abhinaya* are pleasing features in her rich, artistically exquisite presentation. She could be found floating all over the deep stage moving like a deer, hopping like a kangaroo and sailing like a swan with grace and grandeur keeping the audience in firm delectable grip, eyes riveted on the dancer in fond perpetual focus. Her face jerks and such other *mukha abhinaya* present pleasing highlights. She has been giving *bharatanāṭya* performances since 1962 all over Bharat and abroad.

Another special feature of her performances is that her spouse Visweswaran, a nephew of the popular top vocalist G.N. Balasubramanyam and a pleasing santoor, veena and guitar vidwan, presents the vocal music at her performances. This is a pleasing asset indeed. If the Dhananjayans [husband and wife] function both as dancers, the Visweswarans share the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

task on the stage, music going to the Iswara and dance to his spouse. In this, they are the sole couple who satisfy [and have annexed to themselves] the ancient, full definition, "*Gītam, Vādyam, thatha nṛtyam Sangītam uccyatē*". She feels that a sensitive musical mind is a *prima facie* need to flower up as a dancer and that in the hands of an artiste with a vision born of inter-disciplinary inputs and cross pollination, it adapts itself to any given situation and flowers into a universal institution of astounding proportions. Her dance recital in the December Festival, 1980 at the Tamil Isai Sangam was the first live telecast by Doordarshan of a *bharatanatyam* performance.

She is associated with important institutions like Music Academy. Her lec-dems and workshops in different parts of the world are well received and popular. Her students carry the reputation of the talented *guru*. Chitra Visweswaran has named her institution most thoughtfully after the Abode of Sri Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer in whose Divine Presence, the annual Natyanjali Festival is successfully celebrated, Chitra participating. 'Chidambaram' - *chid* is knowledge and *ambaram* is space. Chidambaram is described as the epi-centre of the universe, the heart! Muthuswami Diksitar describes the place as *Chidambaram bhusura* in his *kriti Ānanda natana prakāśam* [*Kedāram*]. It is here the masculine *tāṇḍavam* and the feminine *lasya* were both enacted by the Lord and the Devi for exuberant artistic excellence in the world. Muthu Tandavar, Marimutha Pillai, Gopalakrishna Bharati and many other composers have presented scores of *kṛitis* and *padams* on this *sthala* and *mūrti* and their exalted relevance to mankind. The institution provides excellent training in *bharatanāṭyam*, choreography and *naṭṭuvāṅgam* [practical and theory in conducting dance recitals]. Students of Chitra joined others to present the special features *Virālimalai Kuravanji* and *Sri Krishnam Vandē Jagatgurum*. Her dance and lecture-demonstrations have been documented by Universities and other institutions.

She has participated in most of the international Dance and Music Festivals in and out of India. Chitra claims that she has sought to blend the *dāsi abhinaya* and the neat and precise footwork of the Thanjavur School with the lyrical grace of movement characteristic of the Vazhuvur School and the rthymic, mathematical patterns of the Pandanallur Style. Inspired by the Western Ballet, she avails of geometric patterns. The melodic content apart, she presents enthralling, graceful and alluring well-coordinated movements bringing out the fragrance of *bhāva-rasa* with the attendant joy and satisfaction to the *rasika*.

✡ ✡ ✡

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The Dhananjayans:

V. P. Dhananjayan – The Delight & Marvel of a Dancer: [b. April 17, 1939]

Shanta Dhananjayan – The Better half of the Dancing *Ardhanāriśwara:* [b. August 12,1943]

Place of birth	:	Payyanur, Kerala State/ Shanta at Malacca
Name of father	:	A. Rama Poduval, a teacher./ Shanta's father was accountant with BBC at Kualalumpur
Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts [The term applies to him in the strictest sense of the word indeed!]
Training in dance- **Both** of them	:	Diploma with distinction in dance Post-graduate Diploma with distinction in dance. [Trained under the celebrated Dr. Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra, Chennai – Shanta from 1952 and Dhananjayan from 1953] Dhananjayan plays kathakali besides mridangam Shanta sings and does *nattuvāṅgam*
Institution founded	:	Bharata Kalanjali – A monument of Arts.
Publication	:	*A Dancer on Dance* Edited 2 volumes of *Thoughts & Actions* Numerous articles of merit on dance & music
Institutions connected with	:	International Dance Alliance Board ABHAI – Association of Bharatanatyam Artistes of India Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram, Chennai Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi Virginia Fine Arts Society, Yogaville Institute of Traditional Cultures, Madras University University Selection Boards and many more.
Honours [Shared by the couple]	:	UNESCO Medallion de Merit [Paris] Nāṭya Ratnam from D.M.Kalalayam Nṛtya Vilas Award from Sursingar Samsad Kalaimāmani from Government of Tamil Nadu Award from Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

		Puraskar from Telugu Academy [National Integration]
		Nrtya Chudamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha
		Natya Ratnakara – Austin, India Film Arts, USA.
		Natya Kairavin by Kalapadma Academy Bhopal
		Tamra Patra from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London
		Live Magazine, USA, Award for Best Production, 1996
Select festivals participated	:	Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, Indian Fine Arts Society, Chidambaram Natyanjali, Khajuraho, Konarak, Samskritik Fest. [London], Carthage Fest., Mayor Fest., Germany and many more.
Concert tours	:	U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Europe, Australia, Japan, Germany, Singapore and S. East Asia.
Special features presented	:	*Aikya Bhāratam, Tyāgarāja Vaibhavam, Rādha Mādhavam, Sīta Rāma Katha, Sri Vaḷḷi*, and many more inspired presentations.
Post held	:	Hony. Faculty Professor on board the ship – The Floating University [USA] – Unique feature.
Productions	:	*Mahābhārata, Saṅghamitra, Jungle Book Nṛitya Taraṅgini, Swathi Muttaram, Satyam, Śivam Sundaram, Sakti Prabhāvam*, etc.

✡ ✡ ✡

Timelessness is the basic philosophy of sages and saints. Chronological inexactitude is common in most lives in Bharat. Dhananjayan was born on the 17th April but it was entered erroneously as 30th April in school records and naturally that stuck. Before proceeding further, the following extract from my book ***The Fragrant Garland*** [1996] is worth a place here:

"I had occasion to see the song '*Varugalāmo*' of Gopala Krishna Bharati portrayed in bharatanatyam by the eminent Nṛtya Chudamani. The pregnant pathos of the song was, and perhaps could only be, brought out by Dhananjayan in all its soulful eloquent intensity. It was a magnificent, matchless presentation. Gopala Krishna Bharati once wondered whether his opera *Nandanār* was so grandly conceived when he attended the *Kālakṣēpam*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of the celebrated Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar [1841-1903] and praises were being showered on him, the entire assemblage blissfully unaware of his unnoticed presence. How would he be delighted to see Dhananjayan's exquisite and spirited portrayal of *Nandanār* were he to see it! Dhananjayan **really brings Nandanar back to life before the audience and surely he excels.** The *bhakti bhāva* he brings out when the musicians sing the passage '*Parama Kṛpānidhi allavō*', the sense of excruciating vexation he pours forth while they sing *Bhūmiyil pulayanāi pirandēnē* or *puṇṇiyam ṣeyyāmal irundēnē* and the absolute sense of total surrender [*śaraṇāgati*] he depicts the passage *saraṇ adaindēnē* are soul-filling and mesmerizing In his *bhāva-rasa*-soaked *abhinaya* for each and every passage, the *rasika* drinks deep the delicious *rasa* that copiously flows out of his *bhāva*-rich bharatanatyam. Imperceptibly, many could be seen, wiping off the unsolicited tears gushing out of their wet eyes on a warm eve. [Is not he propagating absolute *bhakti* which Nandanar, the apostle, symbolizes! For once, Dhananjayan forgets his role as an artiste and with *adwaitic* faith turns and transforms himself into a *yōgi,* saint, crusader, all in one. He has the blessing of an attractive masculine personality with a feminine tinge and firm intellectual grasp of the overt and hidden nuances and finesse of *sāhitya, saṅgita and nṛtya.*] **If Gopalakrishna Bharati was Nandanar incarnate in bringing out the opera, Dhananjayan is the *alter ego* of Nandanar in its delectable portrayal!"**

Dhananjayan and his able dancer-wife Shanta were both nurtured in the dancers' paradise amidst sylvan surroundings, which nature's child Sakuntala of Kalidasa would have envied, the Santiniketan of the South, the Kalakshetra of Adyar. Surely they have done mammoth credit to the renowned institution and added considerable laurels to the great institution as well as to the art and to themselves. Guru Chandu Panickar invested them with the artistry. They are a winning couple, perhaps the best among the few others. It is a convincing fact that male dancers, in the context of scores of illustrious, highly talented female dancers of lavish calibre on the field enjoying the advantages of divine beauty, make-up, costumes and ornaments added to feminine charm, grace and elegance, have to fight against odds to gather name and fame and ascend to the top of the ladder. In this atmosphere of constraints, it is remarkable that the Dhananjayans, with remarkable artistic affluence, born of native culture, training, practice and robust vision, ascended and reached the heights very quickly and together, like Tenzing Norkay and Edmund Hillary. There is however the subtle difference. The two mountaineers were like *Siva ganas* both being males and they had to descend as soon as they established their achievement. The Dhananjayans, on the other hand, representing ***tāndavam*** and ***lasya,*** have stayed at the zenith of fame and popularity, never to look back. There is yet another subtle significance in that this delightful couple pleases both Lord Siva, the source of *Tāndavam* or Cosmic Dance and Devi Parvati, the origin of *lasya*! They are made for each other indeed. They came – each alone - from Kerala, joined the effulgent institution, learnt the arts to the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

optimum and married, their dancing hearts having wedded each other much earlier. It was a marriage of arts, artistic souls.

India presented the magnificent Uday Shankar and it was he who 'gained raves and plaudits as an incarnation of the divine on the stage'. He entered the Indian and world stage thanks to Anna Pavlova. Even so, the Dhananjayans [married in 1966] got their inherent artistic glitter and embellishment chiselled and polished at the Kalakshetra's Jewellery under the eminent Rukmini Devi, the torch-bearer of reformation and renaissance in bharatanatyam. And when they found that their genii needed a larger, open and unfettered field and Dhananjayan's lofty, innovative mind and urge to fly as a free bird needed a field free from constraints, the couple left Kalakshetra and founded the Bharata Kalanjali in 1968-69. For three years, he worked in a local company to make the ends meet, while Shanta looked after the institution during his absence. The institution celebrated its silver jubilee with much fanfare. The first opportunity came in 1970 with a month-long visit to Malaysia and Singapore. Later it was all a race with the clock and the calendar. It has since won world-wide acclaim.

If Dhananjayan has established himself as a top bharatanatyam artiste of wondrous repute, it is no small tribute to his magnificent perseverance, personality, matchless artistry, innovative acumen, musical and dancing expertise and specialization in choreography and other vital fields. He had the vision of a poet even while young and wrote poetry in malayalam at the age of nine. Behind the success of every man, there is a lady and it is absolutely true of the Dhananjayan. Shanta enjoys the respect and accolades of all and in the true Indian spirit of womanhood, of which special mention has already been made in this series, she shines and shares in the fullest measure the effulgence her spouse draws. When Pandit Ravi Shankar states, 'I have seldom come across two such beautiful human beings, wonderful artistes so cooperative and affectionate and yet so humble!', he is echoing the voice of artistes and art-lovers. Now let Dhananjayan speak on his life:

'Our life as a dancing couple has been a long struggle. A true artist relies on his or her own art and faithfully serves the ART and not his SELF. All the hard and harsh paths we walked together [Did not the divine couple of Ayodhya do likewise?] have become pleasant memory... I was born in a poor family... Rukmini Devi gave me full scholarship with boarding and lodging. [That is at once recognition of the inherent potential, candour and merit of the boy and the exceptional capability of Rukmini Devi in spotting out talents.] Shanta on her way to Shantiniketan landed at Kalakshetra and was a paying student. Somehow I passed my Bachelor of Arts examination and attended all classes whatever it related to. It was *gurukula* atmosphere and I attended to the needs of the *guru*. I married Shanta in 1966 and left Kalakshetra to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

take a job as I had to maintain myself and my parents at home. I would rush back from office to attend the classes. There ensued a struggle between self-confidence and self-prestige. **And finally we won!**

'**All opportunities came due to sheer merit. It is a fact that people outside our country would appraise hidden talents from our country and then local people would start adding feathers to our caps!** We started [practising economy in every aspect] producing dances with home-made costumes, jewellery and songs. We trained a lot of musicians from poor families and built all into a professional troupe. Today Bharata Kalanjali stands [as a mighty edifice], a testimony for integrity, solidarity, perfection, discipline, perseverance [courage and conviction, artistic grace and values]. It was Shanta's moral strength that made it feasible.'

Self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control lead life to sovereign power, said Tennyson. The life of the Dhananjayans is yet another proof of it. And he is proud to state that Shanta played the role of an ideal Indian wife full of everything great, grand and graceful that could lead to success. She is simply great in character and conviction. "She is undoubtedly the best bharatanatyam dancer today and I would bet on that. We function as two bodies with one soul!", says he. Shanta was away with her parents from 1962 to 1965 but came back with a fragrant garland for him, her pre-determined spouse, concealed in her mind!

Did she put it around his neck? No, it was the Dushyant who did it first! It was a specimen of emotional adventurism, a piece of *śṛiṅgāra* in practice, an announcement of what was to come up and a wonderful experience. Only a true artiste could relish and experience that wonderful spell of ecstatic outburst, the truly uncontrollable and, indeed, an unforgettable emotional act. All honours and all the best wishes be with the wonderful couple. And here is that episode recounted by Shankar Hombal, Kalapadma Dance Academy, Bhopal.

'The ecstasy of Nandanar, the untouchable illiterate slave to whom realization of God came through sheer devotion, finding expression in the rhythmic movements of Dhananjayan, with Shanta at *naṭṭuvāṇigam* as part of the programme *Purush,* was yet another occasion when I was emotionally stirred. The audience was elevated to the blissful state of Nandanar... Years later, it was the ballet, *Sīta Swayamvaram* choreographed by *athai* [*guru* Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra]. Dhananjayan was 16 and Shanta was about 12. Sita accepted the Lord in *swayamvaram* by garlanding him. I was playing the role of Dasaratha. The curtain fell but **we the performers were yet to return to our consciousness.** Suddenly Dhananjayan threw the garland he was wearing around Shanta's neck. **There was a shock wave** and **reprimands followed**. I feel the fragrance of that garland did not fade at all by the lapse of time. Once again, they stand by my side now as

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

life-partners and co-artistes.'

[Note: Garlands from time immemorial have played a distinct role in Indian life. No wedding is complete without exchange of garlands. In *swayamvaram*, the princess, with the magical garland in hand, goes round the gallery studded with the presence of the galaxy of royalty to choose her spouse from among them. In some cases of *jallikattu*-s [bull-fights], a garland is thrown around and on whomsoever it falls, he shall start the game like the toss of coin in cricket. In the enchanting story of *Śilappadikāram,* Madhavi, the dancer, flings the garland she had danced with at the marriage reception and, lo!, it falls with miraculous accuracy on the round healthy neck of the rich merchant-bridegroom, Kovalan and he is led away by her to the utter dismay of the bride, Kannagi and the entire assembly present. *Pushpamālām samarpayāmi* is a vital ingredient in the performances of *pūjas.* In music, there are *rāgamālika* and *rāgatālamālika.* And many more.]

Well, apart from adding lustre to arts by presenting dance recitals, workshops, etc and training students, the Dhananjayans are to be congratulated for founding with profound vision a residential art cum academic institution at Payyanur appropriately called **Bhaskara** to give practical shape to the age-old prayer:

Asatōma satgamaya tamasōma jyōtir gamaya
Mṛtyōrma amṛta gamaya *I*
Om ̇śāntiḥ, ̇śāntiḥ, ̇śāntiḥ *II*

[Lead us from ignorance to wisdom, darkness to light, and death to immortality.]

May it prosper and blossom into a Santiniketan and Kalakshetra!

✡ ✡ ✡

N. P. Indira Bai Thankachy – Bharatanatya Artiste: [M.E. 1104]

Place of birth	·	Tiruvananthapuram
Parents	:	Narasimhan Thampi & Ponnamma Thankachy
Training in bharatanatyam under	:	Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai of lavish fame and merit for three years in *gurukulavasa.*]
Training in mridangam under	:	Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Ayyar at Thanjavur
Training in music at	:	Swati Tirunal Music Academy
Institution founded	:	Minakshi Bharatanatya Academy, Trivandram [in music, dance and percussion]

The family is noted for traditional and passionate dedication to music and composition.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Kuttikunju Thankachy, the famous composer of the malayalam *āttakatha* and many other poems was great grandmother. Kuttikunju herself was the daughter of the celebrated Irayiamman Tampi. Both their lives have already been covered in the *Garlands*. Thus there has been a robust musical tradition and inspiration Indira Bai has had her own training under stalwarts in the Thanjavur tradition both in dance and percussion. She is thus eminently fit to pass on the heritage to her students she is now concentrating on.

✡ ✡ ✡

Jayan Bharatakshetra - Danseuse: [b. July 17, 1962]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvanantapuram
Parents	:	M Shankaran Nair and Thankamma
General Qualification	:	Bachelor of Arts.
Training in dance:under		
Bharatanatyam	:	Natvan Paramashivam, KalakshetraVilasini, Chandrika Kurup, Kalakshetra Shali Vijayan
Mohiniattam	:	Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma, Chandrika Kurup & Noopura Institute of Mohiniattam
Kerala Natanam	:	Dr. Guru Gopinath, Vishwa Kala Kendram
Kuchipudi	:	Chandrika Kurup Noopura Institute of Classical Dance
Kathakali	:	Kalamandalam Chengarapalli Anujan
Odissi	:	Guru Thrinath Maharana, Delhi
Contemporary Dance	:	Daksha Seth Dance Company
Debut	:	October 21, 1982
Post held	:	Teacher/Mg. Staff, Noopura Institute of Classical Dance, Tiruvanantapuram [1984-1997] Director, Bharatakshetra, Institute of Trg. in Traditional, Classical & Martial Arts & Research [1996 to date]

She was part of the troupe of Daksha Seth Dance Company that toured India performing contemporary dance. She has been undergoing training in veena under P. Hariharan.

✡ ✡ ✡

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Kalanidhi Narayanan – Queen Mother of *Abhinaya*
[b. December 7, 1938]

Kalanidhi Narayanan is a very senior artiste who is hailed as '*māmi*' denoting a respected, well-informed, cultured, traditional *guru* in the domain of dance. She took to dance at the tender age of seven, gave several performances between 1948-1953 for laudable causes. At the age of sixteen she had to distance herself from the field initially due to mishaps to her *gurus* and then on her marriage. She staged a brilliant comeback in 1973. She took to dance full of conviction and enthusiasm when the art was the monopoly of *devadasis* [*iśai vēlālars*] and was the first girl from high caste society to enter the field and quite soon Rukmini Devi, founder of Kalakshetra followed. The art being the monopoly of, and confined to, the professional *dēvadāsis* was then languishing Both these pioneering ladies hailed from respectable brahmin families of standing were lured entirely by their deep insight in and keen love of the art.

Kalanidhi Narayanan is now a leading *abhinaya guru* who vouches for purity and perfection in every single aspect and detail of the art. She holds the view that if dance is a way of offering devotion, *abhinaya* takes the dancer closer to god as it brings out succinctly the underlying manifold *bhāvas* that lie embedded in heart and soul finding reflection in songs. She points out that *bhakti* alone could not provide adequate menu to a dance concert, that *śṛiṅgāra* is vital to bring out the excellent fragrance and subtle beauties of the art but that *śṛiṅgāra* does not *ipso facto* connote love among human beings alone and that it does extend to relationship with god. There are *vātsalya śṛiṅgāra, bhakti śṛiṅgāra* and *rati śṛiṅgāra*. She points out that eminent saintly composers have invoked these in their songs and hailed god as the *nāyaka* [as in *kuravanjis*], the adoring *bhakta* assuming the role of the beloved, devout *nāyika*. She insists that erotic element in *śṛiṅgāra bhāva* should not be sacrificed and reduced to mere *bhakti* in presenting *abhinaya*. The *sahitya bhava* needs be totally understood and fully assimilated by the dancer to bring out and portray countless alternative *vyabhichari* or *sanchāri bhāvas* that lie embedded in each and every single passage and admit of multiple portrayals.. *Abhinaya* excels in providing scope for these and the limit lies only in the innovative capability and inspired, expressive talents of the dancer. She is an authority on *abhiṇaya* and has said that 'it is very difficult to write on it as the nuances cannot be put in words but could only be taught or discussed orally'.

Kalanidhi Narayanan feels that *nṛitta* is assuming dominance in present day presentation, that *abhinaya* given prominence in yester decades is diminishing now. It is true. This may perhaps be due to, avers some, the reticence of male *gurus* in teaching closer *aṅgika abhinaya* aspects to girls of good families who have been taking to dance

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

in recent years. It is also said that it is difficult for a male teacher to bring out the deeper emotions to *abhinaya* perfectly. The *avarōhana* in *abhinaya* in concerts is also due to the demanding high level of concentration, knowledge and understanding that are *sine quo non* to understand and appreciate *abhinaya*. *Nṛitta* is more dazzling to the eye and less demanding in the intellectual content of response. The intrusion of other styles of dances has also its impact in less *abhinaya* content. She feels that Rukmini Devi gave undue emphasis to body postures to the detriment of emotions. [This version is discounted by V. P. Dhananjayan.] Kalanidhi Narayanan sets for her students a rigorous schedule and mode of teaching to ensure excellence of the best. She has a staggering list of the repertoire adopted for teaching. She has been conducting many workshops and crash courses. She has produced many features and Kṣetrayya is her favourite composer. Says she:

> 'His *padas* are interesting to perform from different angles providing ample scope for delineation of each idea. Economy in lyric shines with the added virtue his capturing the soul and essence of different types of *nāyikas*, the interpretation of the *bhāvas* being fascinating though challenging.'

Parents	:	S.V. Ganapathy and Sumitra. Grandfather Krishnaswami Ayyar was a connoisseur
Learnt dance under	:	Mylapore Gowri Ammal *initially.* Kanchipuram Kannappa Pillai in *nṛitta* Chinniah Naidu in *abhinaya*
Learnt music from	:	Manakkal Sivarajan and Kamakshi Ammal, daughter of Veenai Dhanam Ammal
Debut	:	At Chidambaram at the age of nine.
Publication	:	*Aspects of Abhinaya.*
Honours		
1982	:	Sarngadev Award, Sur Singar Samsad
1985	:	Padma Bhushan by President of India
1990	:	Nritya Chudamani by Krishna Gana Sabha
1990	:	Kalaimamani by Tamil Nadu Government
1990	:	Sangeet Natak Akademy Award
1991-1994	:	Emeritus Fellowship by Government of India
1996	:	Nyaya Praveena
1998	:	E. Krishna Ayyar Medal from *Sruti*
1999	:	Kalidas Samman [M.P. Government]

✡ ✡ ✡

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Kamala – A pioneering danseuse of lavish fame:

The magnificent song '*Āduvōmē paḷḷu pāduvōmē*' sung by Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati in his immense poetic grandiloquent vision to celebrate the attainment of freedom [three or four decades before Independence was actually won by India] was the craze of freedom fighters, dramatists and danseuses. Young D.K. Pattammal caught the imagination and appreciation of venerable Satyamurti and others by singing such songs which were close to their hearts. The song symbolizes the delirious outburst of the long suppressed joy and fervour of the people having achieved freedom after a millennium of slavery and naturally it was the popular favourite of all ages of people. The song got a further fillip when Baby Kamala danced to it quite charmingly in the film *Bālayōgini* produced in the early forties of the twentieth century by Director K. Subramanyam, father of Dr. Padma Subramanyam in which Papanasam Sivan and other celebrities too had acted. Nearly six decades have passed and still the dance of Kamala of that song is screened on the Independence Day or the Republic Day celebrations and viewed by passionate art-lovers. That is the measure of the matchless magnificence of the enchanting and enticing song, its immortal author as well as the dancer who portrayed it in all its vibrant excellence, Kamala. In earlier decades she was the darling favourite of art-conscious youth and few homes had not witnessed their children dancing in imitation of Kamala. Kamala and, through her, dance took hold of many hundreds of passionate homes then. *Śilappadikāram* may boast of the artistic atmosphere buzzing with vocal and instrumental music, dance and drama of Poompuhar City where lived the danseuse Madhavi and the Kovalan-Kannagi couple. But when Kamala danced in the film, every home became a mini replica of that ancient Chola City! The art conscious South was conquered by her exquisite presentation in those impressional years of resurgent India. She became the idol of children and the model to imitate!

Kamala hailed from Thanjavur, the fond and favourite chosen home of all arts and crafts. She had training initially at Mumbai and then under the renowned Kattumannarkoil Muthukumaraswamy Pillai and V. Ramayya Pillai. She symbolizes all that is splenderous in bharatanatyam and enjoys universal reputation. Of course Baby Kamala, the name that electrified the world of art-lovers, is now a grand dame. Her tremendous assets are her singularly artistic stature and deportment, her nimble and supple body lending itself to the varied artistic demands of the art. She is blest with an enchanting, acceptable expressive face that conveys the varied alluring *mukhābhinaya* felicitously. There is calm decor and demeanour in her presentation eliciting wide popularity and appreciation from public. Her art conforms to the highest standards set by tradition. She was among the earliest pioneer ambassadors of India when she founded the institution, Bharata Natyalaya in 1960 in the United States to train and propagate the graceful Indian arts of music and dance and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

sanskrit. Many dancers of repute owe their artistic fame and name to her. She was the earliest ambassador of Indian art to many other foreign countries too. She represented India at many international forums like Las Vegas Convention [1962], Theatre des Nations at Paris [1964].

She has been honoured with many awards and titles like Padma Bhushan from the President of India in 1970, Kalai Sikhamani from Sangita Nataka Sangham, Madras and *Sruti Foundations*'s E. Krishna Ayyar Award.

✡ ✡ ✡

Karthiga Kanesar – A Roving Bharatanatya Ambassador: [b. March 4, 1946]

Place of birth	:	Jaffna, Sri Lanka
Parents	:	N. Vythilingam & Leela Vythilingam
Training in dance	:	Initial training under Natyasiromani Veeramani Iyer, Jaffna *Gurukulavāsa* under Vazhuvur Ramaiah Pillai, the celebrated maestro at Madras.
Institution founded	:	Karthiga School of Dancing at Colombo, Chennai & Sydney in Australia
Publications	:	*Tamiḻar Vaḻarta Ādal Kalaigal* (1969) *Kālam Tarum Nātya Kalai* (1981) *India Nātyattin Drāvida Marabhu* (1985) This book won the Award of the Tamil University, Thanjavur *Nāṭya Kadalil Pudiya Alaigal* (1988)
Honour	:	Nāṭyakalānidhi by Sri Lankan Government.

Karthiga Kanesar hails from a cultured family while her husband Raja Kanesar is a scientist and author. Her training under Ramaiah Pillai gave her a comprehensive view of the glamour and glory of the art and her preceptor helped her further providing *naṭṭuvāṅgam* for some of her concerts at prominent centres. A restless artiste, she has been hopping across many continents founding schools as mentioned above, presenting workshops and lecture demonstrations, conducting special training classes, etc. Universities have availed

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of her services in this respect, particularly in United Kingdom. Her intuitive and innovative talents helped to take to choreography, research-based dance-dramas introducing *de novo* plots and styles. Her presentations included:

Rāmāyaṇa	*Śilambu.*
Ecstacy in the Rain	*For Survival.*
Dawn	*Birth of a Divine Star*

The irrepressible urge for innovation and novelty has led to sparkling changes in presentation, perhaps designed to take the art better appreciated by the audience in Western countries. Quite a number of students have graduated from her schools. She believes in minimal equipment on the stage limited to lighting and costumes, so that the art-loving viewer's attention is focussed mainly on the dancer's presentation indicating robust self-assurance and self-confidence. Some of her productions have been presented with orchestral music alone *sans* vocal music (*sāhitya*), etc. Since 1975, she has brought forth many specialized presentations.

Perhaps with her lavish experience abroad, Karthiga can explore the possibility of founding a school in Indonesia which has had a rich orientation in Indian epics and arts.

✡ ✡ ✡

E. Krishna Ayyar – A matchless savant of arts:
[August 9, 1897 – 1968]

Advocate, freedom fighter who suffered incarceration for two terms during the freedom struggle, former Secretary of the Madras Music Academy [from inception to 1939], art critic, Editor, *New Age,* Secretary Madras Sangita Nataka Sangham, bharatanāṭya artiste, actor, promoter of arts and above all a calm, unruffled man of action, khadi-clad fighter, E. Krishna Ayyar was one of the most colourful figures in the field of arts. His matchless work and enduring achievement brought in the resuscitation, resurgence and renaissance of bharatanatya. His marvellous contribution is apt to be lost sight of in the fast moving scenario of colour and glamour, adulation and modern pageantry. His colourful life has been dealt with in *A Garland* which may be perused. Bharatanatyam will not be what it is but for his untiring toil in the face of stiff opposition from religious, social and other forces.

Krishna Ayyar was a bharatanatya artiste duly trained both in music and dance. The learned advocate underwent training in bharatanatyam under Madurantakam Jagadambal

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

in that distant past and one could appreciate his fanatic passion for the art. He had given fantastic performances donning the female dancer's robes in prime characters like Malavika, etc. too. They were days when men played the roles of lady characters and so he took to it naturally, equipped as he was fully. He introduced bharatanatyam concerts in the Music Academy which act tended to lend respect to the art which was in danger because of its then monopolistic moorings in the *devadasi* community. The film song '*Āttatthai pārtidāmal, āḷai, āḷai pārkirar*' (focus on the person and not on her art!) held true to the then prevailing situation – of course, barring honourable exceptions. The abolition of the Dēvadāsi Inams and the attendant abolition of dedication of some girls to temples did not *ipso facto* arrest or stop immoral traffic. It could only cut off the community from moorings in some big temples and enfranchise the lands held by some of them. The nominal status was taken off but all else enjoyed *status quo ante* with differing perceptions.

His keen sense of art distinguished, like the proverbial swan, art and the artistic soul in the *dēvadāsi* community from the prevalent stigma of immoral traffic. He segrêgated the artistic talents in the community and brought it to the full bloom and focus of the world. He held out the art as a noble, god-given, cultured way of life for any devotee to take to. Birth was no deterrent. Kalanidhi Narayanan set the trend and stepped in from among the upper castes. Soon Rukmini Devi joined. The world is now facing a near surfeit of talented dancers from well educated, cultured, prominent families and it could even be said that the art is considered as an essential qualification in society.

Karikal Cholan led the way for better irrigation of the Cauvery belt. Bharati showed how a cultured Indian should be and behave. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai demonstrated how an Indian too could take to shipping. C.V. Raman established that it was possible for an Indian to secure the coveted Nobel Prize. Bharata, Abhinava Gupta, Ilango and others codified the bharatanatya for the future. Even so, Krishna Ayyar salvaged the art from its dismal moorings and presented it on a platter to the enlightened members of the society which grasped it with rare enthusiasm. Krishna Ayyar encouraged other arts too when he worked with the Madras Sangita Nataka Sangham.

Sruti Foundation has instituted an annual award to commemorate Krishna Ayyar's contribution and attainments as a trend-setter. But more public recognition is deservedly due to him. Dance artistes and enthusiasts may direct significant steps in the direction.

✡ ✡ ✡

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Lakshmi Viswanathan – Artiste of Grace and *Bhava*: [b. January 27, 1944]

'Born in a family where Karnatak music is loved by one and all, Lakshmi Viswanathan was guided by her versatile mother who was the first brahmin lady to appear in films'. She danced at home whenever her mother sang or played the veena. As she knew the music well, learning dance was enjoyable to her. She rightly holds the view that one who is blest with exposure to music continuously from childhood positively expresses herself better than one who had not such a benefit and had to pick up the rudiments at a later period or pretend to know the music. **'It is not enough to respond to music while dancing. That would be superficial! One can spot out the difference between the expressive presentation of one who knows the music well and of one who knows it not but pretends!'** There is grace in her art and movements, beauty and deportment in her personality, dazzling nuances in her artistic presentation and a confident, self-assured countenance to express, demonstrate and convey what she conceives in her *manōdharmic* imagination. *Mukha* and *aṅga abhinaya* being vital requisites for portrayal of *bhāvas*, a conducive face is *sine quo non* for dancers to highlight vivid projections and present the conceived images with elegant communicative expression. Lakshmi, a scion of an ebullient, cultured family of all fine arts, sister of the prominent musician Charumati and a cousin of Dr. Padma Subramaniam, enjoys it all in full measure. She presents a dynamic pleasing personality, totally self-confident and elegant blended with poetic grace and grandeur while dancing. A noted dance teacher, imaginative choreographer and writer, she is among the galaxy of Indian dancers of high renown and specialists in *abhinaya*. She is reputed to be one of the foremost torch-bearers of the high classicism of Thanjavur style. She has developed the artistic style to suit her genius and needs. Born amidst resplendent arts and artistes, she found it easy to imbibe and incorporate the finest in sweet creativity and verdant inspiration from dancers of the earlier generation. She is an expert costume designer too. She would sing the *padams* herself while dancing.

Academic Qualification	:	Graduate of Madras University
Training in dance under	:	Kausalya, disciple of Ramayya Pillai Sankari Krishnan, disciple of Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai. Kutralam Ganesham Pillai & Kanchi Ellappa Pillai Vempatti Chinnasatyam in kuchipudi
Training in music under	:	Tediyur Narayanaswamy & Tiruvarur Krishnamurti
Research done	:	'Devadasi Tradition of Dance in Temples of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

		Tamil Nadu' under a Government of India scholarship during 1979-1981.
Debut	:	1953
Honours	:	Kalaimamani of the Tamil Nadu Government Nrtya Kala Siromani Nrtya Chudamani by Sri Krishna Gana Sabha Madras [1984] Sangeet Natak Akademy Award in 1999
Institutions associated with	:	Music Academy, Kalakshetra, etc. Visiting Professor, Brandeis University, Boston
Publication	:	*Bharatanatyam – The Tamil Heritage*
Film produced	:	*The Poetry of Dance* [scripted, choreographed & directed by her to depict dance traditions in their original milieu.]
Dance dramas choreographed	:	*Hṛdaya Vilāpam* - Longings of the heart! *Kṛṣṇa Darśanam* *Caturaṅga* *Vaya Vṛksha*, etc.
Concert tours	:	Israel, Malaysia, Europe, U.S.A. The West has constant need for her performances, illuminating workshops and demonstrations.
Institution founded	:	Centre for Dance and Allied Arts, appropriately named *Abhinaya.*

Lakshmi Viswanathan has given countless recitals, numerous demonstrations, conducted workshops, directed festival performances, acted as examiner in dance, and has presented numerous articles. She has presented many thematic recitals and is closely associated with numerous associations of repute and has presented recitals in many continents. While in Brussels, she appeared in a short film on the French choreographer, 'Bejart and the influence of Indian dance on his works'.

✡ ✡ ✡

V. Mydhili - Dancer / Choreographer: [b. 1947]

In an auspicious year in the glittering annals of Bharat, Mydhili [not Mythili] was born

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

in Chittoor taluk of Palghat district, of Parameswaran and Saradha. The art conscious parents placed her for training in bharatanatyam at the tender age of seven as it occurs with most other artistes probably as the number seven not only reflects the *sapta swaras* but also helps to build up and shape the career in tune with natural aspirations, aptitude and conduct. The adage runs, *Viḷaiyum payir muḷaiyilē teriyum* [the tender plant expresses itself even as it germinates]. She was admitted into the Kerala Kalamandalam. Getting her diploma at fifteen, she joined the famous Kuchipudi Art Academy of Vempatti Chinnasatyam at Chennai.

She made her debut at Trichur in october 1965. She later set up the two decade-old mini training school for bharatanatyam and mohiniyattam besides attending to workshops, lecture demonstrations, etc. This paved the way for her shaping herself as a competent choreographer. Invisibly she was led into the sphere of choreography garnering her talents and expertise. To give practical solidity to her inspired inclinations, she founded the Midhilalaya Dance Academy in 1984 at Tiruvanantapuram. There it flourishes. She was awarded the Merit Certificate by Kerala Sangita Nataka Academy in October 1993.

She composes the required performance menu to suit occasions for presenting her team of students at functions and festivals, private performances and demonstrations. She has provided a conjuring list of compositions and choreography of eminent composers' songs which look like the great Venkatamakhin's *Meḷakarta* Scheme covering scores of *ragas* and structures like *padams* [43], *jatiswaras* [4], *sabdams* [3], *varṇams* [17], *tillānas* [8], besides eleven group items including *Dasāvatāram* and *Durgāṣṭakam.* Teaching and training are her chosen fields of artistic expression.

✡ ✡ ✡

Dr. Padma Subramanyam – Dance-maestro, Scholar, Danseologist:

Parentage	:	Director K.Subramanyam & Minakshi
Training in dance under	:	Vazhuvur Ramiah Pillai, Dandapani Pillai and Mylai Gowri Ammal Kausalya gave initial training to her
Qualification	:	Master of Arts in Music [Few post graduates qualify for it better than she.]
		Doctorate on her thesis '*Karanas in Indian Dance and Sculpture*' from Annamalai University.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Honours and titles	:	Padma Sri from the President of India Award from Sangit Nataka Akademy Award of the Government of Tamil Nadu Soviet Land Nehru Award 'For the Sake of Honour' Award from Rotary Club, Chennai Kalidas Samman from Government of Madhya Pradesh Gupta Award from Gupta Foundation Eluru and National Award for Excellence from Academy of Fine Arts, Tirupati Fukuoka Asian Cultural Prize [Japan] [First dancer in the world to receive it!] Rajiv Gandhi National Integration Award by Indian Bank & Idhayam Publication Isai Perarigñar from Tamil Isai Sangam, Chennai Panchajanyam from Vigil, Chennai Bharata Sastra Rakshamani by Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham in 1997 Nadabrhmam from Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai
Institution founded	:	Nṛtyōdhaya, Chennai, an internationally reputed Cradle of Dance & Music.
Film produced	:	'Bharata Natya Sastra' for Doordarshan *Karaṇas* in Indian Dance and Sculptures
Publications	:	*Nātya Śāstra and National Unity* *Bharata's Art – Then and Now.* *Bharata Kalai Kōtpādu* – A *lakṣana* treatise.

She enjoys dedicating not only the god-given perfect frame well adaptable to present diverse a*davus, etc.*, but her lavish cerebral assets to eloquent artistic pursuits. The scholarly, research-oriented, fertile mind brings forth myriad, subtle, enchanting alternatives [*bhāva sanchāras*] which are the delight of connoisseurs and the lay. The felicity of communicative expression, her immaculate stage presence, the myriad intuitive, creative phases of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*, the enticing, meaningful, interpretative *nṛtya saṅgatis* presented lavishly keep the art-hungry audience in perpetual attention. Dr. Padma, conscious of the depth and fragrant message of the *karaṇa* scheme and all that is best in the art, is a complete and comprehensive top artiste of rare intellectual calibre with international stature, name and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

fame. Her choreography is classical and cerebral. In her art, tradition woos modernity in happy union.

Her presentation of themes is brilliant. Thus when she takes up the crisp exhilarating piece *Ānandamē, Ānandamē, Bhavanikkuḷ varuvadu ānandamē*, the delirious joy she projects is infectious and is injected full well among the audience. When she depicts the episode of apostle Sirutondar inflicting on himself the unnatural [why, unheard of] test imposed by his guest, she with artistic self-confidence and self-exuberance brings to focus the diverse emotions, from the most deliriously pleasing to the harshest, most dexterously and exquisitely presented. In '*Siṟutondar nammai amudu kētka, siṟuvanai kaṟiyākkave*' and '*siruvanai azhaikka*', etc. the monstrosity of cutting to pieces one's own son, cooking and serving it to the guest and the anti-climax of the son appearing in flesh and beauty again by divine grace are all absolutely thrilling and enthralling. Being a scholar with a legacy of fine arts, there is not only the classical content but much of underlying, subtle spiritual flavour in her themes. She dances expressively, she sings melodiously, she conducts [*naṭṭuvāṅgam*] exquisitely with expertise and merit and she brings up her disciples as ideal torch-bearers of her stylish mastery.

Director K. Subramanyam in the South was as famous as Shantaram was in the North. Everyone of his pioneering films was a masterpiece of fiction and fact, morality, patriotism and message, high grade artistry and inspired thematic novelty, classical music and dance. And they were all masterpieces of a brilliant mind that could shape anyone into a top grade artiste. [In fact, there was parallel belief. The Indian National Congress which garnered the sum total of sacrifice and won the freedom of the country could then say, 'We could nominate even a straw as candidate to the legislature and it would win' and the straws did win too. It was also true that they were all straws of gold, guileless, guiltless, sincere, honest, human patriots to the core.] Even so, Subramanyam's artistes, novices or unmoulded clay the previous eve, turned, on entry, top artistes of grace and grandeur. He was blest with what is called the golden touch.

His daughter inheriting that classical flavour could be no different!. Mother Minakshi was a composer, well read in sanskrit and tamil. Padma sings excellently, choreographs with mastery and practically is an expert in everything on *naṭṭuvāṅgam*, dance and music. 'She had choreographed *ēkartha prayōga* presentations of consistent one theme. Her *Kṛiṣṇāya tubhyam namah* and *Rāmāya tubhyam namah* come closer to the *Bhana* variety of *uparupaka,* the dance-drama form. There are two documentaries on her personality and art.'

[Source : *Marg Publications*]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Dr. Padma took up for research the *karaṇas* exemplified in sculptures and paintings in temples. They constitute the *tour de force* of bharatanatya and *abhinaya*. She got her doctorate on the thesis prepared. This specialization got her the blessings of the Saint of the Century, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi, who commissioned her to formulate afresh, codify and design a new set of 108 *karaṇas* in granite sculptures for the new temple at Satara for Sri Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer. It was not to copy the *karaṇa* figures sculptured in the temples of the South but was to be inspired invention. Quite a cerebral exercise, challenging task and the doctor completed that divinely ordained mission she was entrusted with inspired devotion and dedication Was she correct in her designs? Do they enjoy the authority of our *śāstraic* stipulations? Who is to certify to it, if one has to? The proof of her intellectual and artistic stature and eminence and her accurate conception of the *karaṇas* came in the shape of solid sculptures of fifty *karaṇas* in the world renowned ninth century archaeological monument of Prambanan in Central Java, Indonesia. 'The remarkable feature of most of these *karaṇa* series is that they are very similar to the Doctor's designs for the *karaṇa* sculptures for the temple at Satara. She was blest with this irrefutable proof for the authenticity of a reconstruction of the *karaṇas*. This "link beyond time and space" is the subject of a book of an Italian archaeologist, Dr. Alessandra who did her post-doctoral research under Dr. Padma through the British Academy, London'.

Brother Balakrishnan is the President of Nrtyodhaya and Doctor Padma is its Director. Theory and practice in dance, music and sanskrit are all taught and special scholarships are extended to deserving poor students of merit. Dr. Padma has won for her, her family and her institution all laurels worthy of mention. In her presentation *lakṣaṇa* is happily wedded to *lakṣya,* effulgent tradition illumined with the measured glamour of modernity. The inimitable grandeur of the Indian past finds deep manifestation in her art.

✡ ✡ ✡

Ranjani Gopal Menon [Hongkong] –Bharatanatyam artiste: [January 1, 1969]

Place of birth	:	Tiruvanantapuram
Parentage	:	Mother Ramani, a trained artiste in music and dance and Govind Balashankar
Qualification	:	Master of Arts [Sociology]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Training in bharatanatyam under	:	Mahalingam Pillai at Raja Rajeswari School of Bharatanatyam, Mumbai Padma Sri T. Balasaraswati at the Music Academy School, Chennai Lakshmi Knight, daughter of Balasaraswati Nattuvanar Ramiah Pillai and others.
Debut	:	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai in 1984.

Ranjani hails from a family devoted to arts. Apart from her mother's training in both music and dance, her grandmother Rajeswari Menon was a performing musician who was honoured with the Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1994. Her grand uncle founded the Madhavan Nayar Foundation which is dedicated to arts. Ranjani had been awarded scholarships and prizes. She has taken to training others as she is in Hongkong. Quite strangely from the bamboo groves of Kerala, she finds herself now at the 'Bamboo Grove', Hongkong! But is it not a fact that bamboo provided the most ancient musical instrument, the flute and presented the finest divine, first and foremost flautist, Sri Krisna!

✡ ✡ ✡

Sastri Sisters – Vasanti Sridhar & Sisters: Danseuses:

Vasanti, Uma and Baghyalakshmi are the trio who present bharatanatyam solo, duo or trio. Vasanti Sridhar is the eldest. The two elder sisters are Post-graduates in Fine Arts [Bharatanatyam] of the Bombay University. The sisters had their training under –

Vasanti and Uma:

Kalaimamani Nagarajan, Mahalingam Pillai,
Sri Raja Rajeswari Bharatanatya Kala Mandir, Bombay
Dr. Kanak Rele, Kathirvelu, Sundar Rajan &
Nalanda Nritya Maha Vidyalaya, Bombay University
[Sri Sadasivam, New Delhi – Vasanti only]

Baghyalakshmi:

Kalaimamani Nagarajan, Sri Raja Rajeswari Bharatanatya Kala Mandir
Sadasivam [New Delhi] and Swapna Sundari

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The sisters have performed at many cenres in India and abroad in varying combinations. They have performed in countries like Nigeria-Lagos, Ibadan, Europe, U.K., Middle East, Nepal, etc. They have appeared on Doordarshan for different themes and conducted workshops.

Vasanti has enhanced her artistic equipment with further training under Jamuna Krishnan and Kalanidhi Narayanan. She is running a school and had presented her students in a collective debut. [This is indeed a very wise step since the cost of *arangētram* for individual students on completion of course is prohibitive and a good number of them disappear after debut from the field leaving behind an album for visitors [for a time] and kith and kin to glance and refresh their joy later!] The 'gazelle-eyed, fleet-footed' [Subbudu] Vasanti delights in presenting her vast repertoire and artistic grace and expertise. She is not only an expert dancer but does chreography and *naṭṭuvāṅgam* and leads the orchestra. A multi-faceted artiste with scintillating, chiselled gait and lavish potential, she is a true artiste. Her presentation is replete with *bhāva-rasa* portrayal. Her *abhinaya* is reposeful and *adavus* original and inspired.

✡ ✡ ✡

Sobha Antarjanam –Bharatanatyam & Mohiniyattam:

[b. April 29, 1967]

Parents	:	V.S. Subramanian Nambudripad E.S. Thankamani [Devaki Antarjanam]
General qualification	:	Master of Arts [Music] Diploma in Mohiniyattam
Training in Bharatanatyam under	:	Kalamandalam Sumati and Kala Vijayan Chandaiko Kurup & Kalakshetra Shali Vijayan
Training in Mohiniyattam under	:	Kalamandalam Kalyanikutti Amma Kalamandalam Sumati & Chandrika Kurup
Contemporary dance under	:	Daksha Seth Dance Company: 1994 onwards
Tour abroad	:	Hongkong in 1998 for Arts Festival
Institution founded	:	Lalithodayam Nrtyalaya – Institute of Classical Dance at Tiruvanantapuram.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Sobhana Kumari, as Sobha Antarjanam is also called,has taken varied training in dance and is now associated with Daksha Seth Dance Company, a prominent contemporary dance group travelling widely. She is engaged in directing the courses of the institution founded.

✡ ✡ ✡

Dr. Sudharani Raghupathy, Dancer, Choreographer, *Guru*: [b. March 21, 1944]

Place of birth	:	Pollachi
Parents	:	H.L. Jagannath & Shakuntala.
Family Background	:	Grandfather was an architect. Father an agricultural graduate. Husband is from the very familiar Ponds & Co. [Thus planning and design, production and fragrance have found expression in her art and in the institution she has founded.]
Academic Qualification	:	Graduate in Philosophy and Sociology at Bangalore Sponsored student, World History of Modern Dance & Studio Arts at Randolph-Macon Women's College, Virginia.
Training in Dance under	:	U. S. Krishna Rao K.P. Kittappa Pillai and Muthiah Pillai Gowri Ammal, Mylapore in *abhinaya* Martha Graham techniques in Modern Dance in USA
Training in music	:	Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore T. Chowdiah & N. Krishnan. Training in Western music at Randolph-Macon.
Training in music and *naṭṭuvāṇigam*	:	K.P. Kittappa Pillai and Vidwan Madurai N. Krishnan
Publication	:	Articles on Dances, reviews, Presentation of papers

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Honours	:	Quite large – A few are listed here:
		Nrtya Chudamani from Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras 1979
		Award from Lions' Club, Tiruchirapalli 1979
		Kalaimamani by Tamil Nadu Govt. 1980
		Concert at the United Nations on Human Rights Day 1981
		Award from Sangeet Natak Akademy, Delhi 1984
		Natana Siromani, Karaikudi Tamil Sangham 1985
		Natya Ratna by PICA 1986
		Padma Shri from President of India 1988
		Natya Kalanidhi by Natyanjali, Chidambaram 1988
		Madura Kala Pravina by Satguru Sangita Samajam 1993
		Natya Jyoti by Sri Kapali Fine Arts, Chennai 1995
		Saptagiri Sangita Vidwanmani by TTD 1996
Institution founded	:	Shree Bharatalaya with Madurai N.Krishnan in 1970
Posts held	:	Visiting Senior Teaching Associate of Indian Studies, Colgate University
		Executive and Council Member, Sangit Natak Akademy, Delhi
		Connected with many other bodies.
Publications	:	*Madura Mārgam* – Dance compositions of Madurai N.Krishanan
		Laghu Bharatam – An Appreciation of Bharatanatyam – 3 vols.

Sudharani Raghupathy took to dancing as a precocious child at the age of three and her debut was at the age of ten. Plays veena and piano and knows besides english, sanskrit, tamil, hindi and kannada. Had varied training under highly capable expert musicians and danseologists. She won scholarships from Governments of Mysore and India for her studies and training. Marriage took her off for a while but she returned to artistic pursuits. Scholarships helped to continue training. Has travelled extensively, given a number of demonstrations and lectures, conducted workshops and has acted as judge at tests in India and abroad. Has been giving hundreds of dance performances everywhere in the enlightened world. Has given dozens of benefit performances too. Excellent education, planned training in music and varied styles of dances under stalwarts and a keen, imaginative,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

intuitive and inspired mind enabled Sudharani Raghupathy to attain excellence in her passionate artistic pursuits and helped her to reach the top. A picture of artistic grace and culture, she is a dynamic source of inspiration and explorative intuition. A life of dedication revels in the success of the institution she has founded to give concrete shapes to her innovative ideals and profound aspirations. She has given on television a serial titled *Bharatāñjali* conveying the eloquence and message of the art.

Shree Bharatalaya is a premier institution providing specialized training in bharatanatyam. Sangit Natak Akademy has extended its help. The three-decade old institution is very popular and stands for excellence and quality in dance and music as instruments for human development and promotion of culture. To achieve this, she has equipped it with a well-designed curriculum of training that includes training in music, study of languages, stagecraft, costumes, make-up, aesthetics, *naṭṭuvāṅgam* and research. Bharatalaya has successfully presented many feature programmes, group dance-dramas such as *Gitānjali, Rāmāyaṇa, Shakti Prabhāvam*, *Virālimalai Kuravanji, Krishṇam Vandē Jagatgurum,* etc.

The last two presentations were magnificent joint efforts in which the galaxy of dancers from other institutions of repute too joined. They were symbols of unity in art, that knows not isolation or exclusion of kindred spirits. The faculty comprises dedicated artistes. Students of Colgate University, U.S.A. are also trained by her as teacher-coordinator. The first student to make her debut was Jayanti in 1973.

Madurai N. Krishnan, a top vocalist, *siddha puruṣa* and disciple of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyanger, is an accredited Sangita Kala Sikhamani. He is co-founder-director of Shree Bharatalaya. His entire soul is dedicated and directed to the promotion of this august institution. [His life has already been covered in detail in earlier *Garlands*.] He is providing not only riçh music of classical purity to the institution and to its students but is endowing it with all the lyrics it needs and in all structures of compositions in scores and, in short, everything it requires in *saṅgita, sāhitya, lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya*. This is a formidable asset indeed for the image and growth of the institution.

A laudable tribute: Veena S. Balachandar was a unique personality [with a unique emphasis on the word 'unique']. There is an idiom meaning that if one gets a nod from the mouth of Sage Vasistha, there lies no appeal to it. Here is an excerpt from the letters of Balachander [which have a like importance] to Sudharani Raghupati:

'I seem to have met my counterpart at last in our cultural sphere. Yes! In our world

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of "fine arts", joining the rat-race is itself practised by many as a **fine art**!!! It is hence a total relief to find someone who is endowed with **backbone**! The greatest solace especially in an artiste's life is to adhere to principles and live with a certain amount of decorum and dignity topped by justifiably assertive **self prestige**! I have happily witnessed all these in you. I truly admire you for your courage and dynamism!

'YOU ARE A TRUE ARTIST! NOT JUST GREAT !'

✡ ✡ ✡

Sujata Srinivasan – Innovative Dancer / Choreographer: [b. Septr. 29, 1965]

Fair in complexion, elegant in deportment, cute and beautiful in appearance, Sujatha Srinivasan has that perfect blend of an expressive face radiating joy, curiosity, intuition and inspiration and a slender, flexible, responsive body that lends itself to the demands of the multiplicity of *adavus,* etc., that form an integral part of bharatanatya and which are *sine quo non* for a successful bharatanatya artiste. She is musically talented, can play mrdangam and there is dance. She strictly conforms to and satisfies the definition *gītam, vādyam tatha nṛtyam trayam saṅgitam uccyatē.* Whether she qualified herself in the triple arts to satisfy this criterion or not is not known. Father is an art fanatic and mother is a musician. She had the advantage of understanding parents, good education, as is the case with many of the present generation of artistes, excellent training under distinguished, stalwart *guru*-artistes, wide exposure and promoting opportunities to display her talents. And the bird having established a name at home has flown away to the New Continent and is spreading its artistic wings there having founded an institution to gather focus.

Sujatha was born at Triplicane, Chennai which enjoys a spiritual atmosphere even now. The child should have constantly been exposed to the musical atmosphere in and around the temple of Sri Parthasarathy Swamy who has been hailed by saints and sages. In his delectable song on Sri Parthasarathy in the bewitching tune *Suddha Danyasi,* Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar refers to the charm of the Lord that stole the hearts of *gōpis* and Consort Rukmini and to His being **worshipped by the musical Tumburu and Narada.** Exposed to this fascinating Lord, the object of *madhura śṛiṅgāra* and His festivals from childhood, to the artistic *gōpurams* and *mandaps* in the temple signifying that art is *sine quo non* for cultured living and to the beautiful tank just in front of the house connoting that art is no less wide and deep than it, Sujatha suckled with the beauty and grandeur of the place had no option but to flower into a danseuse of charm, grace and intellect. That

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

environment instils a sense of beauty and a fervour to pursue art and beauty finds positive proof abundantly in the life of Sujatha.

Parents	:	K. Srinivasan [*Higginbothams*] and Sushila, a qualified musician and disciple of Sundaresan and Dr. Ramanathan
Academic Qualification	:	Master of Arts [Literature]
Training in dance under		Sri Saraswati Gana Nilayam Chitra Visweswaran, a top famed artiste Swamimalai S.K Rajarathinam, a distinguished *guru.* Kalanidhi Narayanan, a top artiste of fame. Udupi Lakshminarayanan, a distinguished *guru*
Countries visited,	:	U.S.A., Canada, France, Sri Lanka & Switzerland
Institution founded in States	:	Shri Kala Mandir, Ohio, U.S.A.
Awards	:	Bharata Natya Tilakam, Yuva Kala Bharati Natana Mamani, Awards from Music Academy, etc.

Sujata Srinivasan, 'A' grade artiste with Doordarshan, has given extensive dance performances in India before settling down in the States. Adopting an intelligent and intellectual concert *menu,* she has presented varied themes such as single composer compositions, etc. She adheres to classical values strictly.

✡ ✡ ✡

Tara Kalyani – A glittering danseuse: [b. November 1, 1966]

Tara Kalyani hails from a family that has been enjoying the affluence of music. Through her mother, she is related to the two eminent Sangita Kalanidhis, T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar and Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar, who had enriched the Classical Carnatic music in a great way. Mother is a prominent musician who is covered elsewhere in this *Melodic Garland.* The fascinating factor in the artistic life of Tara is that she is a participant in many of the cultural delegations as mentioned below. 'A' grade artiste with Doordarshan, she is versatile both in bharatanatyam and mohiniattam. She had taken part in television

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

serials and in the film 'Marikkumilla Jñan'. She is doing research in *Nāṭya Śāstra* in the Kerala University.

She has been giving quite a number of performances in India and abroad. She is concentrating now in United Arab Emirate to found an institution for training NRI children.

Place of birth	:	Tiruvananthapuram
Parents	:	S. Kalyanakrishnan & R. Subbulakshmi
Qualification	:	Master of Arts [Philosophy]
Training in dance under	:	Tiruvananthapuam Vinayachandran Swamimalai Rajarathinam Pillai [Chennai]
Delegations, etc. participated		Indian International Trade Fairs, SARS Summit, South Zone Cultural Centre, ITDC, KTDC, etc. fairs and festivals.

✡ ✡ ✡

Vyjayantimala Bali –The Dazzling Phenomenon in Art World:

The year 1947 is a landmark not only in the history of India but also in the life of the eminent artiste of lavish reputation, dancer of vast parts and for decades the prime matinee idol of millions, Vyjayantimala Bali. She has had a brilliant and successful, hectic and varied life ever since she made her debut [*arañgētram*] in that memorable year *as* a dancer. Blest with a beautiful, agile, artistic and resilient body, grand deportment and cerebral qualities of intuition, innovation and artistry, she has been one of the few fittest artistes who answer the strictest demands of the art in *adavu, abhinaya* or *nṛitta.* She attained the peak of fame as a remarkable dancer and entered the film world which she dominated with rare accomplishment, success, name and fame unchallenged for two decades.

"She possesses an arresting stage presence. Tall in stature, a combination of beauty of face and figure, gifted with a keen sense of *laya,* her dancing presents a quiet and dignified quality. Her *nṛtta* is exquisite. Performing it in unhurried tempo, she revels in the beauty of line, that has the distinct quality of the Pandanallur School. In slow but steady architectonic numbers of pure dance and *nṛtta* for *varṇams,* she brings in rare imaginative and innovative designs. Her footwork is eloquent and firm; her *nṛtta* is flawless; her art is mellowed and *bhakti* permeates her *abhinaya.*" – *Marg Publications.* In short, there is

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

dignity in concept, majesty in gait, artistry in details and eloquent message in presentation and performance.

Training in bharatanatya under	:	Dandayudhapani Pillai Vazhuvur Ramayya Pillai and Thanjavur Kittappa [who provided *naṭṭuvāṅgam* too at her concerts.]
Choreography	:	*Azhagar Kuravanji, Āndal, Tiruppāvai, Candalika, Sant Sakku, etc.*
Institution founded	:	Natyalaya
Concert tours abroad	:	United States, U.S.S.R.,Europe
Post held	:	Member of Parliament

✡ ✡ ✡

Yamini Krishnamurti – A magnificent Dancer:

Father	:	Prof. Krishnamurti, a scholar with profound erudition in sanskrit.
Training in dance	:	At Kalakshetra when Rukmini devi was at its helm. Kanchi Ellappa Pillai and Thanjavur Kittappa Pillai
Post held	:	Taught bharatanatyam at Sangeet Bharati Institute, Delhi for sometime.
Debut [*araṅgētram*]	:	1957 at Madras. Earlier she had taken part in Kalakshetra recitals.

Yamini Krishnamurti was blest with an environment of art and culture at home and during her period of apprentice with a scholarly father and a consummate sister in Jyoti who presented music and *naṭṭuvāṅgam* for long for her concerts. Merit, artistic grace and an innovative, inspired mind easily led her to the peak of fame quite soon.

'Vastly gifted with a resilient body, limbs and a supple, tall frame, an amazing stamina, a visage with large luminous eyes which she uses most alluringly, she casts an impressive and immediate spell on the audience. Her *nṛtta* is artistically chiselled and dynamic; lines

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

are arresting; movements are complete, powerful and energetic. Her dazzling performance leaves an impression to conjure with for long. Her *nṛtta* shines like a multi-dimensional diamond jewel and she sets standards which inspire younger generations. In *abhinaya*, her treatment of *śṛiṅgāra* is enticing and presentation of uninhibited passion within traditional norms is enchanting. Her art is fresh and enchanting, tradition happily wedded to inspired, innovative novelty and artistry of her own. The tremendous self-assurance and a delectable element of arrogance she invests suit her personality admirably. She presents total stage presence; exercises self analysis of her art and brings out the eloquence of bharatanatyam.'

– Courtesy T.S. Parthasarathy - *Marg Publications*

MAHĀ GAṆAPATI : Ten hands, crimson in complexion. *Vallabha Dēvi*, His spouse with lotus in hand is on his lap. Crescent on head. Gold kalasa (pot) in his trunk. In his song *Sri Mahā Ganapati* (*Gowla*), Dikṣitar states that *Ganapati* is worshiped by *Viṣṇu, Bṛhma, Indira,* etc., to cross the ocean of *Samsāra* and hails him as the 'Spouse of *Vallabha Dēvi*' in his song *Mahā Ganapatē* (*Nata Nārāyani*).

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

hidden agenda? That is the world, sigh the bards of Bharat. Even as one sings or hears the song of eternal significance, *Nidhi Cāla Sukhamā (Kalyāni),* mind wanders far and wide inexplicably!

A Garland has recorded that a good veteran avoided singing the song on the plea that it was not proper morally to sing it while receiving remuneration.

❋❋❋

Emotional tears: The basic reason:

Whenever he takes up light melodies [popularly called *tukkadās*] towards the close of concerts, our Mangudi [not Malgudi] *vidwan* would shed tears, uncontrollable genuine tears, the cause of which most of his admirers could not fathom. The audience more often appreciated the tears attributing them to the vidwan's emotional involvement in and identification with the lyric and tune and his *bhava*-laden rendition. Quite a few relished it perhaps as the tears were on the eyes of another man and not in theirs! Once confronted, the vidwan confided the truth in hushed tones but full of genuine anguish:.

> "Moved by the intense passion of the public for light melodies [*tukkadās*], I brought out a publication of those melodies which command rapturous applause at concerts investing my entire life-savings which were, of course, not much. Alas, few books have been sold. Whenever I take up light melodies at concerts, I am reminded of my misadventure and the vision of untouched bundles left at home which, like aged unmarried daughters with no hopes, haunt me. I could not resist tears gushing forth."

My honest sympathy expressed, I used to prepare myself at his concerts for the profusion of tears whether the *bhāva* of the song warranted it or not.

❋❋❋

Filtered Reverence – Its mettle:

On Siddharta: 'I have seen one man, one man only, before whom I must lower my eyes. I will never lower my eyes before any other. No other teaching will attract me since this man's teachings have not done so.' –Hermann Hess

Ettayapuram Subramania Bharati, the fragrant flower in the garden of national poets, affirms a like sentiment in respect of Subbarama Diksitar, the celebrated author of *Saṅgita*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Sampradāya Pradarśini, the formost among music thesauri:

> **'To the pseudo religious and the princes, I bowed not my head in reverence. Matchless is thy fame. I passed thee, my head bowed.'**

Magnificent indeed is he who follows the lead of such great leaders!

❋ ❋ ❋

Age and Ageing

'Age has not withered her intense charm', Shakespeare wrote in his poetical eloquence. But that wonderful Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra [68-30 B.C.E.] worthy of that praise had in the end to take her own life! Surfeit in anything is dangerous. Anyhow that is historic fiction. Beauty, valour or power, it is seen, do fade away. Things have not been the same in many a case where artistes continue to give concerts long after their voices have bidden good-bye in their anxiety and passion for the art. After all where is the issue of retirement for politicians, artistes, lawyers, etc? *Vide Another Garland* [page 395] for an interesting farce. The nonagenarian, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar is disinclined to give concerts. Still he could not decline when the pressure comes from close well-wishers and admirers. Thus he gave a concert on January 1, 2000. He started his concert career in 1926 and his is a fit case for inclusion in the *Guinness Book of Records*. Here is a specific case though from the field of sports which illustrates how excruciating it is for any to tear himself off from the field which he dominated with just acclaim just a little earlier.

'Steffi Graf packed her bags and disappeared behind the forest-green back-drop of the Wimbledon Centre Court - perhaps for the last time in her distinguished career! She did not turn around and wave as was her wonted practice nor did she linger on to bid good bye...Many of her fans – which was a multitude in truth – fondly hoped that she would decide not to come back. They would be better off relishing the warmth and golden glow of memory rather than having to deal with the bluster chill of reality.' But what happened? Like the phoenix, she reappeared with energy and hope, twelve years after her memorable entry, and reached quite near the peak. Alas, the crown eluded at the last moment and she went down with 6-4, 7-5 and then came the sad announcement, "I won't be back here as a player. That is for sure."

[Of course, this was contradicted in action no sooner than it was reported!] As it was with this tennis star, it has been more so with titans in the evening of their lives. Such announcements have been made by many musicians too.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

One has also to remember that a musician, particularly one in the classical field, **does not amass money** as participants in other fields do and it is unfortunately a pathetic fact indeed viewed against the background of their spending decades as non-stipendiary students and apprentices.

***

Vengeance: Blood for Melody?

Daulatrao Scindia invited Bade Mohamed Khan to teach three musical aspirants but the Khan evaded teaching them. The youngsters listened to his music secreting themselves behind the throne as and when he sang and mastered well the nuances of his style. When they made their debut, the Khan was a picture of fury and decided to wreak vengeance on the apprentices whose only fault lay in their passion for art. When Haddu, one of the boys was applauded, Khan too joined it and maliciously asked him to repeat the *kadabijli*, in a calculated suggestion that was sure to have fatal results. The young aspirant responded sincerely. Lo, his rib snapped and blood oozed out of his mouth. With feigned solicitude, Khan asked Haddu to complete the *tan* telling him,

'Complete it, my son. We die but once. It is God's will that you sacrifice your life for music.'

– Source: Gowri Ramnarayan

Let this depressing conduct be compared with an incident concerning the matchless bard and recluse, Uthukadu Venkatasubba Ayyar [1700-1765] whose juicy songs on Lord Krishna enliven concerts and dances. He went on composing songs and sang them for *ātmānanda* [self satisfaction and spiritual elevation] in the wilderness. In strict. assertion of Subramania Bharati's *Kākkai kuruvi eṅgal jāti; kaḍalum malaiyum eṅgal kūṭṭam*], he was at home in pursuit of self-realization in the company of birds and animals far from the foibles of humans. He sought to remain anonymous but Rudrapasupatia Pillai surreptitiously learnt them all. Old generations had computerized minds which could 'save' what all they heard once – *ēka santha grāhi*-s like Macaulay, Sarabha Sastri, etc. When he heard Pillai singing those songs at a family function later, he just regretted, in self pity, that his wish for anonymity had been frustrated!

Tyagaraja surrendered his right to compose songs in *Ānandabhairavi rāga* just to please the young head-swollen lad, Tirubhuvanam Swaminatha! When Pallavi Gopala Ayyar returned fully equipped, his *guru*, who drove him out earlier as unfit, welcomed

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

him with open warm arms and blessed him with all auspicious love as only a great *guru* can and Gopala Ayyar lives even today in his inimitable compositions! It is the legacy of a *dharmic* culture which helps to bring out native, innate qualities of nobility of head and heart and breadth of vision. Hinduism has been unique in vociferously extolling such virtues.

❋❋❋

Tribute to Excellence:

Professor T.R.Subramaniam presented a special *pallavi* at the Central College of Carnatic Music, Chennai in about 1960. Lalgudi Jayaraman, violin maestro, responded with vision, precision and technically superb play. Principal Sangita Kalanidhi Musiri Subramania Ayyar, in a laudatory speech pregnant with much punch and humour, congratulated Jayaraman:

> 'You have played excellently. If I were in your place, I would have faced just two options!'
>
> [Pause]
>
> 'Do you know what are they? Whether to desert the concert dais with my violin or without!' –Source; Lalgudi Jayaraman on December 13, 1998

A handsome tribute to wizard Jayaraman and to the technical brilliance of Subramaniam's rendition. A similar massive tribute was paid to Jayaraman by Sangita Kalanidhi Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar too at the Music Academy when the *pallavi* in *Simhanandana tāla* was demonstrated by him. Of course, the maestro has been lauded by everyone.

❋❋❋

Oosh, no applause! Panditji sleeps!:

In a village, the word 'headman' once used to denote one and only person and the postman would deliver any letter if the address just mentions, 'The Headman, Pincode no…, India.' Even so, in independent India, Panditji denotes normally only the first Prime Minister of Bharat. He graced the '*Melody and Rhythm*' of maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar.

'When the curtain came down after a soothing lullaby, the audience hushed by the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

peaceful quality of the music was unable to applaud. It so happened that Panditji had completely fallen asleep. [Was it because of the lullaby?] And they could not applaud lest it should awaken beloved Nehru. After the finale [of the concert, not his sleep], Nehruji came straightaway on the stage, embraced me and congratulated.'

[Note: Embraces are of diverse categories. Rama embraced with love Guha and Anjaneya.. Dhrtarastira too embraced Bhima but with intent to crush him . Kṛṣṇa embraced *gōpi* to elevate them in spiritual sphere. Each differs from others in form, content and intent.] That Nehru was a connoisseur *par excellence* in arts, is well known.

***

Unique violins:

Chidambaram temple, the seat of Cosmic Dancer, was built in the seventh century and renovated by Pallava rulers. There is a sculpture of a female violinist playing with a bow on violin fifteen inches long and five inches broad. [MAMJ LXIV]. Mysore Chowdiah has referred to a similar sculpture in the temple of his place. This has relevance to the origin of the instrument.

John Wessels [70] has made the world's tiniest violin in three weeks. 44.6 mm long and weighing 262 gms, it is an exact replica of the standard violin. It could be played but the pitch is so high that the human ear could not catch it!

***

Chappal and Music – Stage Management:

We have seen that the eminent patriot, Iswar Candra Vidyasagar could not countenance the agonizing atrocity of the Englishman, though it was being only enacted in a pre-independence drama 'Blue Mirror' by an Indian. Acting in that role was so superbly realistic that the patriot threw his chappal on the actor which the understanding actor chose to acknowledge with pride as worthy of being treasured as the best memento and recognition of his acting prowess. [*Vide* page 339 *The Fragrant Garland*]

Here is another. The actor gave an unexceptional exhibition of his best musical skill on the stage as they were days of musician-actors with no playback music. Promptly its grade got recognition from a musical enthusiast in the auditorium when a chappal flew towards

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the stage and fell precisely on the actor. A born actor he was, who knew the art of stagecraft too. He soliloquized for a while and then murmured audibly:

'Here is a fitting reward for my music! But how am I to acknowledge it?
Of what use is one chappal? Well, I shall try for the other!'

And he sang. True to his anticipatory suggestion, the other chappal came at jet speed and landed near him! The actor bowed with profound grace, picked it up and paraded the proud possession, like a winning tennis ace or a batsman who had hit up a century, gallantly thanking the *rasika* for his love of music.

And he did not fail to return the compliment with a kick! Expressing deep regret that his music had made the admirer walk back home bare-footed, he threw the chappals to a corner in apparent contempt!

That is the **essence and excellence of stagecraft!**

❋❋❋

Sri Purandara divines birth-date of Sri Rama!

The *pithāmaha* of Calassical Carnatic music was a colourful personality, whose life was full of episodes and anecdotes, achievements and attainments. A full account has been given in *A Garland.* His life was presented by the dance troupe of Kalakshetra, Chennai. Conjuring photos therefrom, thanks to Director Rajaram, illustrate this volume.

The eminent Dasa, in one of his rapturous compositions, mentions that the Prince of Ayodhya was born on *Caitra Sukla Navami Budha vara*. It is said that the mention of Wednesday is unique as it finds no mention by others.

–*The Kalyana Kalpataru* 76 Vol XLII

❋❋❋

Remuneration for national duty?

The prince among patriot - poets, Subramanya Bharati had the vision of free India decades before any possibility of independence came up for consideration and wrote songs eulogizing, lauding and celebrating the advent of independence and its aftermath –

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

virtually how he would have liked free India to act on the achievement of independence! Was he conscious in advance of his being absent from the scene on the momentous occasion! *Āḍuvōmē paḷḷu pāḍuvōmē, Verṛi yeṭṭu tikkum eṭṭa koṭṭu muraśē, Viḍutalai, Viḍutalai*, etc are some of those songs that could be composed only by an absolute patriot poet with vision. He went deliriously euphoric. Padma Vibhushana D. K. Pattammal, then the favourite young star-musician to sing national songs at pre-independence meetings, reminisces:

> 'I sang these songs for the half an hour slot on the 14th August, 1947 [when independence was to dawn and smile over this ancient holy land after a dreary period of thousand years of death-like slavery – *Ōrāyiram āṇḍu māṇḍu kidandapin varādupōl vanda māmaṇi*, as Bharati described]. It was a midnight live broadcast. S. Gopalan, Station Director, All India Radio, Chennai gave a cheque for my programme, which I declined saying,
>
> "It is unique honour to sing on this most memorable occasion. And it is a privilege which should not be tarnished and bartered for cheques. I found that not accepting the remuneration itself was not such an easy job. Every singer has to be paid. But I was adamant not to lose the significant privilege and grace of the opportunity to sing on the greatest day in the annals of modern India. Finally my request was accepted to my great joy!'

***

Critic & Critique

Freedom fighter and constructive worker, Madurai Ramaratnam joined *Jaya Bhārati* magazine and was presenting critiques on musical concerts through *Maṇikoḍi*, a popular magazine wedded to freedom movement. In his review of a concert of a prominent violinist, he wrote that circus and gimmicks could be attractive but would not reflect musical knowledge – *saṅgita jñāna* – and, in that context, the concert lacked substance and merit. There was a deluge of protests but the veteran was so sure of his ground that he replied in a massive meaningful challenge born out of self-assurance silencing those who banked on and traded in mere verbiage.

> 'I am prepared to sit and sing. Let your violinist provide accompaniment.
> He and you would realize the truth of my criticism.'

That self-assurance was born of his ability to sing well and appreciate the nuances of classical rendition. One may find a parallel in the outbursts of former tennis star, John Mckenroe challenging referees to come down to the court and take the racket themselves!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Poor referees, how many of them could climb down and accept the challenge?

Sruti magazine has brought out scores of errors committed by critics under the heads *Gobbledgook* and *Gaffes* which show how reviews are presented without proper scrutiny or thought. Critiques, when exposed, provide much more fun and humour than when first read!

❋❋❋

Musical Farewell:

Nagaswara wizard T. N. Rajaratnam Pillai died to the profound remorse of music-lovers. The hearse was taken all along the route with his recorded music on play. An unique occurrence indeed.

Somasundaram Pillai, brother of a veteran freedom fighter, was a kanjira vidwan (percussionist) of exceptional abilities. An *aṣṭāvadāni,* he could play to eight *tālas* simultaneously kept up! When funeral rites for him concluded **there was a six-hour concert,** farewell–cum-homage by star vocalist Madurai Somu (Somasundaram), a rare gesture **in a house in mourning!**

❋❋❋

Summit may fail!

Mating of a Derby winning mare with a Derby winning horse could not be expected to yield a Derby-winning colt, it is said. Likewise a concert of only Sangita Kalanidhis – vocal, instrumental and percussive – might not be a laudatory, gala performance of the highest order to relish and experience. Sundararajan, K. was told of a concert of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar and Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu that failed as proof.

❋❋❋

Marathon Flute Play:

Joseph Shury of Chinmoy Marathon Team presented a non-stop sixty-one hour flute play at Toranto in March 1986 – a magnificent feat indeed indicating brilliant mastery of art, massive perseverance, copious repertoire and technical affluence.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Strange *Rāgas*

Vina Sivaramiah formulated *Rāga Swayambhu* with just four notes both in the *ārōhana* and in the *avarōhana* [ascending and descending orders of notes].

Saint Tyagaraja composed songs with just four notes as in:

Vinave O Manasa [*Vivardini*]
Ninuvina namadendu [*Navarasa kannada*] and
Paluku kanta chakkaranu [*Navarasa kannada*].

The word '*Nirōṣṭi*' means without closing the lips. Veteran Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar formulated a *rāga sans ma* and *pa* and named it *Rāga Nirōṣṭi*, a *janya* of *Sankarābharanam* and composed the song, *Rāja Rāja radite.*

How Dr. Balamurali Krishna created a new *rāga* on the spur of the moment, composed a new song *extempore* and sang it before a distinguished assembly is elsewhere recounted.

***

Stop Sarcasm – My Instrument shall speak!

'That the Conference President has virtually no role to play is an exaggerated sarcasm! I do not wish to speak after each talk. I always wish to speak through my instrument alone and do not rely on talking every time others conclude.'

–R.K. Srinivasamurti in *Sruti* 165

Quite a wholesome practice. *Idu pāttu kacchēriyā, pēcchu kacchēriyā*? [Is it a music recital or a speech performance?] We had mentioned how veteran mridangist, Dr. T.K.Murty stood up on the dais in Hamsadhwani Sabha, put on his upper cloth and asked his disciple to lift the instrument protesting against others going on speaking *ad infinitum* [*was* it *ad nauseum?*], the artistes all the while gazing at them idly and how, in another case, after an unduly protracted introduction, when the principal speaker was asked to give his 'address', in a cultured way of protest, he merely gave his 'home address' and resumed his seat!

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Overflows of Eloquent merit:

When the river runs to brim and further heavy freshes arrive, there is overflow, floods or even breaches. Even so eloquent art and inspired artistes could not be castled in one branch when it cries for more outlets. Thus one sees that Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar always had two-day spells wherever possible – one for a concert and another for *kālakṣēpam*. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar and many others were multi-faceted artistes. In earlier volumes we have seen that Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar and Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar – all titans – had handled instruments and that nagaswara wizard T.N. Rajarathinam Pillai and Tavil wizard Panchami had given vocal concerts. Many such cases could be cited. It is so even with human wisdom. Stalwarts in music unable to confine themselves to one discipline, seek outlets for their pent-up energy and wealth of inspired artistic talents and wisdom. For instance eminent Muthuswami Dikṣitar was vainika-gayaka, besides being a great composer. Tyagaraja and many others were multi-sided stalwarts.

Sangita Kalanidhi T.N. Krishnan is not only a top violinist but had given vocal concerts.

Lalgudi Jayaraman, the violin maestro, has started giving vocal concerts and is an eminent composer too.

T.N. Seshagopalan, the prominent vocalist, gives vina concerts too and is also a harmonist.

M. Chandrasekharan, top violinist gives vocal concerts too.

The list is long. All of them are respected *gurus* too. It is the multi-sided accomplishments that led them to the peak of the ladder and make their advents memorable.

❋❋❋

Knowledge! - *Viva Voce:*

The three-year course is over. *Viva voce* in musicology is on.

Examiner: 'Who wrote *Nāṭya Śāstra*?

[Students blink and stare at each other. Suddenly one gets it in a flash and comes out.]

'Dr. Padma Subramaniam, Sir'

[That intelligence is no monopoly of any one is seen when another gets a like cue and asserts with exhilarating confidence:]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Bala Saraswati, Sir.'

Examiner: 'Both of you are correct in a way. Well, what is *graha bhēdam*?'

'When bad planets reign, there is conflict and confusion. *Graha bhēdam* sets in and differences occur.'

[There is absolute or near unanimity on this among students, as a chorus of voice is raised on it. Birds of the same feather, it is said, flock together, indeed!]

'*Who* wrote *Catur Daṇḍi Prakāśika*?

Amidst obvious confusion, students stare at each other. Finally one after another aver honestly that he was not guilty of writing it! The learned examiner, totally upset and aghast at the utter casual approach and carelessness of students, rushes up to the Principal and complains. The learned head of the institution whose knowledge and interest in music are as far away as Vladivostak is from Vancoeur and who is not an unworthy admirer of the musical prowess of the last of the great mughals, nods and murmurs, 'I suspect the burly boy to have written it'.

In the meanwhile, a boy rushes in saying, 'Mangudi Ram admits writing it, Sir.'

The learned Principal smiles and nods wisely even as the examiner rushes back to scold Ram for not coming out with the truth initially when questioned!

Of course, all the boys are promoted and receive the diplomas at the convocation presided over by a minister. None is now a musician, classical, light, casual or folk!

***

Unique Training – Practical & Rehearsal!

Garlands have brought to notice the tenor and rigidity of apprenticeship in old days in the fields of literature, music, drama, etc. Here is one to indicate how seriously it was viewed, taken and practised to ascend the ladder of fame.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

N. S. Krishnan of fabulous fame had to take on the role of Ali Baba in the film Ali Baba and Forty Thieves and go about riding a donkey. He bought one [not an art student's four-legged stool called donkey but a real ass] and was getting trained. The quadruped [with its long, stoic, serene face, tuft and tail and unmusical voice, found worthy of receiving eulogies in proverbs] became very much attached to its master and would wander as it liked in the studio like a VIP! Asses cost little to maintain and the word 'economy' itself could have been inspired probably from the stable of asses if ever there had been one! It earned a song too in the film from its master. What Kṛiṣṇa, the Prince of Gokulam established with cows, this mortal Kṛṣṇan was not averse to establish a like rapport with his quadruped!

❋❋❋

Sangita Kalanidhi Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar has advocated:

'Moderation in *lakṣaṇa* and preference to *lakṣya* should be the criteria. Those who are helpless in exhibiting *lakṣya* continue to storm the citadel of *lakṣaṇa* and discover fresh avenues of *lakṣana* [theory/grammar]!'

'*Lakṣaṇa* should be taken up after three or four years of training so that it could be assimilated in the background of *lakṣya saṅgita*. Studying theory from inception may be counter productive – *Lakṣya pradānam kalu gita śāstram,* aver the *śāstras*.'

❋❋❋

What is good voice?

The following qualities are *sine quo non:*

a. Traverses the three tempos with felicity;

b. Enjoys *sruti suddham, swara suddham* ;

c. Provides *māduryam* [dulcet]
Kanivu [emotional integration and involvement]
Kuḷaivu [identity with *bhāva\rasa*]
Gāmbīrya [majesty]
Gāna nayam [expositional finesse with graces]

d. Felicity to display all *gamakas* and other embellishments.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

e. Avoiding false voice and exaggerated nasal twang.

f. Proper pronunciation and intonation of lyric.

g. Avoiding styles like loud outbursts, croaking of frogs, etc.

h. Presentation which is sweet, soothing and satisfying.

Tamil musicologist Kalladar had presented a well-considered list of 'do-s' and 'don'ts' which are still relevant *in toto – Vide* page 152 of *Another Garland.*

***

Theory and Practice:

'Does the United Nations remember that, while its principles are embodied in language impossible to improve, it often loses itself in small matters?', queried the first Prime Minister of resurgent India addressing the General Assembly on November 5, 1948. Does not this folly apply to invoking *sampradāya* for everything? 'Music embraces the whole gamut of human emotions, from the simplest to the most refined, from the enjoyment of the ear unto the cries of the soul, which shatters the nerves and gives pain to the European ear', said Alfred Westharp.

'Tradition and innovation never had a smooth meeting point. It was always orthodoxy and heterodoxy…They are the two opposite sides of the same coin and not merely the two sides of the same coin. Tyagaraja was called neo-classic. GNB was a rebel of sorts. [I know that Madurai Mani's style was not considered then as conforming to *sampradāya.*- Author] Today, his music has got merged with tradition', said Prof. T.R..Subramaniam in *Mudhra.*

Udyog Parva of *Mahabharat* has this enlightening passage:

The process of acquiring knowledge takes place–

'*Achāryat padamadatt*	1/4th of knowledge from teacher [*achārya*],
Padam siṣya svamēdhaya I	1/4th by his own intellect
Padam sa bṛmachāribyah	1/4th by discussions and deliberations, discourses and debates with fellow students and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Padhou kalantharena va *II* 1/4th by exposure and experience gained over a period of time.

❋❋❋

Flute: What it connotes?: Sri Satya Sai Baba:

'What would you like to be in the hands of the Lord?'

'The flute?' What does the flute signify?

'Be straight without crookedness;

'Be hollow without pride, individuality, will and idea of self.

'Inhale only the breath of God.

Transmute the breath into melodious music conferring joy of eternity on every fleeting moment.'

Anaya Nayanar attained salvation only through flute and Sarabha Sastri and Mali became immortals only because they excelled as flautists.

Joseph Shury of Chinmoy Marathon Team gave a sixty-one hour flute play at Toranto in March, 1986 – a feat *par excellence!*

❋❋❋

Carnatic Music bade adieu to lute/harp [yāḻ]

Apostle Tirujñāna Sambandar, a *jñāna vṛddha* - child prodigy of eternal fame, sang the song called *Yaḻmuri paṇ* at Dharmapuram near Mayiladuturai. *Yaḻ* had enjoyed popularity and wide acceptance in the country from ancient times though its true shape and model could not be ascertained now. The saintly accompanist Tirunilakanta Yalpana Nayanar was unable to reproduce the song on his *yaḻ* as the youthful vocalist had brought in quite a lot of *gamakas* [voice modulations]. In sheer disgust and desperation, he was about to break the instrument, which was prevented by the saint-vocalist. The song is thus believed to have played a historic role in the development of music. While it bade *adieu* to *yaḻ* for its lack of versatility to bring out elegantly *gamakas,* the beauty of *gamakas* had come to attract the notice of all. *Yaḻ* faded out and disappeared and *gamakas* came to occupy a prime role in the music of the South. PTR Kamala Tyagarajan contends:

'Saint Tirujñāna Sambandar [7th century C.E.] sowed the seed for Carnatic music when he sang investing it with dominance of *gamakas.* **It should be accepted that he was the true Father of Carnatic Music and not Purandaradasa [15th century C.E.]'**

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'*Yaḷmuri paṇ* was actually not one of the *paṇs* [*rāgas*]. It is referred to as *Megārāga Kurinji* or *Viyala Kurinji. Yaḷ,* a plucked digital instrument [*vittisaikkum karuvī*], declined with the popularity of *gamakas.* The saint had demonstrated how the instrument was unsuitable for Classical Carnatic music with its emphasis and reliance on rich embellishments. Vina took its place in *toto* since then and it came to be given weightage and hailed as '*miga nalla vinai*' in the song *Vēyuru tōli paṅgan.*'

On this issue, Dr. Premalatha observes:

'The biography of Tirujñāna Sambandar marks an important stage in the development of the concept of *gamakas* and incidentally the fretted veena. The strings of the *yal* were tuned to the *sruti* of the *suddha* scales. It was a plain instrument with no provision to manipulate. This must have been the reason to discard the harp and improve the vina.'

Eminent musicologist T.S. Parthasarathy opines that ancient treatises do make references to *gamakas* and that it would not be accurate to state that *gamakas* came into play only from the days of Tirujñāna Sambandar. But perhaps it could be that *gamakas* having gained popularity and importance, greater emphasis came to be laid on their use as part of a new emerging style during his time

***

***Tillāna* as sole Concert Menu! Unique Performance:**

Modern concert schedules have a well thought out spread of *varṇam, kṛitis, swaras, ālāpanas, tillānas, jāvalis, tukkadās*, etc. and also occasionally *rāgamālika* and *pallavi* to provide the audience with a variety of musical structures, styles and exposition.

Sulochana Pattabhiraman, an eminent musicologist, choreographer and critic, presented a novel concert entirely with *tillānas* of eminent composers of the past and the present through a number of lady artiste-*siṣyas*. It was a charming, soul-filling, eloquent exposition of pure melody, rhythm, tempo, *swara, jati*, etc. The audience sat spell-bound during 150 minutes of matchless presentation since *tillāna* represents the stamina and vibrancy, beauty and glamour, tempo and variety of *swara, laya, sāhitya,* etc., all in one. There were no dancers but presumably the producer visualized the hearts and minds of the entire audience to dance in tune with the rendition! She was absolutely **correct.** It was a successful experiment, conjuring, titillating and soulful all at once and an **achievement.** It would appeal very much to music-lovers outside the realm of Carnatic music and also to those who are not exposed to Indian music so far. The programme demonstrated the vitality of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

the system. **Hope it would be presented at many forums in and outside India. It aids popularizing Carnatic music.**

❋❋❋

Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar's Eminence:

'I will give you an idea of the Vidwan. Recently I met a seventy-year old woman of his lineage. When I asked her to play, she hesitated saying that she had not touched the instrument for fifteen years. Yet, on persuasion, she played the *Bhairavi varṇa.* So exemplary were her fingering and bowing technique that I just fell at her feet. I thought of how the maestro himself must have played. Even now, when I think of it, I feel the goose bumps coming. Music was the food of such vidwans!'

–Violin stalwart V.V.Subramaniam to
Karaikudi R. Mani, Percussion maestro
[*Layamani Layam*]

❋❋❋

Musical Therapy:

A Garland carries a special article on *Musical Therapy,* eminent neuro surgeon Dr. Brigadier B. Ramamurthy contributing it. According to *Sruti*, Dr. P. Bharati, Chennai 600017, who is also a vainika, has taken up healing through *yōga*, meditation and music. She has brought out the cassette 'Melodies for Musical Therapy' with veena play to serve the purpose. The theory of opening and closing the *chakras* or energy centres of the body and rotating them in different sequences, based on an understanding of the effect produced by specific *swara* combinations of selected *rāgas* on human body and mind, is stated to be the basis.

❋❋❋

Melody v. Noise:

'On arrival at Secunderabad, the principal artiste and the accompanist had each these special instructions in whispers to the organizer taking him aside **separately:**

'The **accompanist** has a tendency to increase the volume of her playing to such loudness that my rendition gets screened. Please ensure that it happens not.'

'The **main artiste** always wants the volume for him to be kept at very high decibels. Please get it reduced.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

At concerts, the artistes pressed for raising the volume while the audience screamed to lower it. **Concert ended in chaos. Melody was the casualty**! [Source: B.R.C. Iyengar in *Sruti*] This malady or obsession with sound/noise continues with many artistes.

***

Pandemonium fathers success: Fury and contrast finale!

Mysore V. Subbayya Naidu was among the brilliant actors of the kannada stage. He entered the Gubbi Veeranna troupe and there was name and fame to him and the troupe. He started his own troupe, Sri Sahitya Samrajya Nataka Mandali and staged many dramas with glittering success. He pioneered many novelties with success. Here is an anecdote narrated by B.V.K. Sastri:

> 'When his *Bhūkailāsam* in telugu was under production, Naidu had to weather a barrage of adverse publicity for poaching into the preserves of telugu art. No theatre dared screening the film for obvious fear of public violence. Ultimately a remote theatre in the telugu belt was persuaded to screen it.
>
> "On the **opening day**, we were shivering, awaiting the inevitable catastrophe. Even before opening time, **huge crowds** had collected outside but inside there were only eighteen people [What a strange number it has been all along!] But after the intermission and exchange of impressions, there was **pandemonium** to witness the picture! And it **ran for nearly six months**", said a proud M.V. Naidu.

***

Tamil Hymns:

Twelve ***Tirumuṛais*** comprising the juicy, musical, elevating songs of Saints Tirujñāna Sambandar, Tirunavukkarasar, Sundaramurti Nayanar and Manickavacakar are the eternal refuge of spiritual and musical souls of Tamil Nadu for well over a millennium and a half. They are pearls of wisdom exuding prosodic beauty, felicity of lyric and tunes set to *paṇs* of old like *Vyāzhakurinji* or *Sourāṣtram*, *Nattapadai* or *Gambhīranāta* and *Takkesi* or *Kambhōji*. A good student of *Tevaram* has to learn them all by heart as is the case with *Vēdic* students. Kalaimamani Swaminatha Odhuvar himself avers that he commenced the learning at the age of seven [as was the general custom then] and learnt 19000 songs. Sri Kapaliswarar Devasthanam, Chennai has brought out the *Panniru Tirumuṛai Tiraṭṭu* containing all the songs of the four apostles.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Honours: V.V.I.Ps : Vidwans:

Honours are positively welcome. Many honours have prestigious values. Some are deservedly conferred; some canvassed for and some snatched from unwilling hands. The most eminent 'Tamil Tyagaraja', a picture of humility, Papanasam Sivan was honoured most deservedly. Once the function was over, he was left miserably alone carrying his honours in the hall in his hands, the others having followed the V.I.Ps or otherwise. A good-natured *rasika* spotted him and took him home! The travails and tribulations of a true vidwan on such occasion may well be imagined. It does not require an *abhinaya* artiste to delineate them all. Just minutes earlier, he was occupying the most prestigious chair and suddenly, he is left alone in that same hall of 'well-meaning *rasikas*, sponsors and organizers!'

Here is another. On February 23, 1985, the Central Nataka Academy conducted the Awards function at Madras in collaboration with premier institutions. The function was gone through solemnly. There followed a flute recital by the eminent Hariprasad Chaurasia. 'There was fluent flow of enchanting music. A sweet and short *Sindhu Bhairavi* was followed by *Madhma Sāraṅg,* the essaying of which was nothing short of witchcraft. He was weaving sheer magic. All the while, the audience was melting and trickling away with determination. V.V.I.Ps. set the precedent. Thanks, apologies and congratulations were exchanged mostly with their backs to Chaurasia and all to the accompaniment of *Sindhu Bhairavi!* And people began to chat among themselves. By the time *Pahadi* was arrived, only those who cared for Chaurasia and his music, the television people, etc. were left!' [*Indian Express* quoted by *Sankarābharanam* 1/9]

***

Divine Wedding stopped by music crazy humans!

The play was ***Vaḷḷi Tirumaṇam*** [Wedding of Lord Muruga and Valli] which was very popular for long and popularity waned only during the last four decades. [Dramas were extravaganzas in chaste, alluring classical music and popularity of a show mounted with the increase in the number of songs. Music ruled and reigned on the stage! Wall-posters, advertisements and hand bills used to announce in bold print the number of songs for each show. There would be tom-tom too. And S.G. Kittappa and K.B. Sundarambal were the favourite co-stars. People were willing to forego theirs all if only the two were to appear on the stage and sing. What an enchanting, alluring and titillating music they sang! Theirs was for Gods to hear and naturally the Gods withdrew Kittappa quite early in his age!] The drama was on. The frequency of frenzied calls for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

encore was so incessant and intense that the play could not proceed to its destined end. **Consequently the Divine Wedding did not take place! [How an eloquent, noble musical atmosphere that pervaded and aided prosperity of arts is changing!]**

***

Will prevails & Necessity decides the Vocation!: T.H. Vinayak Ram:

That necessity has been the mother of opting for a particular art has been seen in many lives. Harihara Sarma, a disciple of Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Ayyar, was a mridangist and was for a time with All India Radio, Tiruchirapalli. He lost one of his fingers in a train accident. Mridangam had to yield to the only feasible alternative morsing, which as all know is the least of the side accompaniments [*upa vādyas*]. Necessity drove him to seek avenues of income at Madras where he started in 1958 the Jaya Ganesh Tala Vadya Vidyalaya which is now a flourishing institution. Harihara Sarma was blest with competent, enterprising, talented progeny and they are in the percussion line having established a name for themselves Young T.H. Vinayak Ram had to take to ghatam when his father was mridangist since the father and son could both attend concerts and get remuneration for both, however little it happened to be. Financial need was the initial reason for Vinayak Ram Brothers specializing in ghatam and they are perhaps the best innovative artistes in the line. They have played in many countries abroad and with world-renowned artistes too. Vinayak Ram was accompanist to Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi for long and the U.N. concert is famous. He taught at the Centre for World Music, San Francisco for six months. He won the Mickey Hart Grammy Award.

***

'Lavani' Venkata Rao – What the prefix connotes?

Lavani Venkata Rao of the Thanjavur Court compiled verses for the seventy-two *mēlakarta rāgas* of the eminent Venkatamakhin and Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar was persuaded to set them to the appropriate tunes. He did it and sang the song in 1883, perhaps Lavani Venkata Rao providing percussion. Ayyar later composed and sang the magnum opus, *Mēlarāgamālika* on Sri Pranatartihara of Tiruvaiyaru which is now current and Dr. M.S.Subbulakshmi under the guidance of Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar has sung it in L.P.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Lāvaṇi' has been a style of folk music with religious and philosophic content in dialogue pattern that was in vogue decades back in dramas, etc. and was naturally absorbing and exciting. It called for tremendous intuitive and innovative lyrical and musical capability on the part of actors as instant questions and answers, witty retorts and repartees were the soul of *lāvaṇi*. **Now the issue is whether Venkata Rao was a *lāvaṇi* artiste of fame and name as he is identified with the art!**

UCCHISHTA GAṆAPATI : Complexion deep green. Six hands. *Rudrākṣa māla* (garland of beads) and veena suggest a contemplative, prayerful mood. The Supreme Repositor of Wisdom and Artistic Inspiration seem deeply immersed in music – play on beri, flute and veena with felicity.

'Adore him and prosper' – *Ucchishta Gaṇapathou* (*Kaśiramakriya*) of Dikṣitar. There is another version of *Nāri Yoni mukhāswādanē, nakna Ramakriya mōdanē.*

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IIIB

LAKṢMI GAṆAPATI : *Gaṇapati* is bluish white and the two goddesses are blue in colour. Ten hands. He is under the shower of amṛuta (nectar) and there is lily in the hands of the goddesses.

–Dikṣitar

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Thoughts & Sayings:
Aphorisms & Epigrams

Indian Craze for Allegory:

Allegory, simile or metaphor is the favourite haunt and pastime of Indian poets and writers from time immemorial to portray emotions or project graphically a visual picture in all its fascinating colours and finesse. Even rustics are not wanting in its florid use; nay, they are much more at home in its figurative native usage than the elite. It is a cerebral, inherited traditional asset of the Indian. For instance, *bharatanāṭya* was most picturesquely and graphically described by the eminent artiste, Balasaraswati in an allegorical way.

Alārippu — It is compared to entering the main *gōpuram* [entrance] of a temple, which is the initial item in a dance recital: [*Alārippu* is the lateral movement *tām, ti, tām*, the arm is stretched, the head lowered at side and for *tai, ta, tai*, the head is gently lifted up. The tender grace of raising and swaying of the head resembling the swaying hood of a cobra is called *dolam*. – K.V.R.]

Jatiswaram — This is akin to the *ardhamandapam*, the small passage between the outer *mandapam* and the inner sanctum, which could be compared to the Suez Canal.

Śabdam — Connotes that the dancer is in the principal *mandapam* proper.

Varṇam — Denotes the dancer playing in the holy precincts of the deity.

Padam — Announces rather indirectly that the dancer is in the inner sanctum presenting her art to the deity [which shall be taken as the audience in a concert].

Tillāna — It is the exultation of the *jīvātma* in anticipation of its attaining *mukti* (salvation) - diluting itself in the Absolute indicating the finale of the concert. [In *tillāna*, the torso makes two looping movements at sides, forward and backward as if the flame is deflected by the breeze. There is also a forward movement involving a buoyant dip, raising of the head and undulation of the trunk. – K.V.R.]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Thus every stage is graphically brought home by comparison with precise and picturesque illustrations to the audience in all its lustrous aura and aroma, grace and artistic splendour symbolically. In musical compositions on *śṛiṅgāra*, figures of speech are favourite and ideal tools to express basic emotions and to convey the *Sāhitya bhāva* in its sweet essence and in an assimilative but lustrous form. The lovelorn hero or heroine is disgusted even with objects of normal life and love, kith or kin and even favourite dishes as if they torment him or her. For instance, in *Naḷa Caritram* for *kathakaḷi* by Unnai Warrier, Nala laments:

> 'The garden is the battlefield of Kāma Dēva; the trees symbolize war-camps; those flowers are the weapons of war and the music of kōkila (cuckoo) is but the war-bugle!'

But the instant Nala is united with his beloved, in an exquisite exuberant mood of pristine love and joy, Damayanti feels and affirms:

> 'Could there be any other place so soul-filling and enthralling as this garden?'

Such contradictory, conflicting feelings are potential reservoirs for presentation of varied gestures by dancers. *Vāggēyakāras* in Carnatic music revel in drawing on, and leave no chance to draw on the immense potential with glittering allure and appeal, the inexhaustive mines of titillating figurative parallels. This lends charm and dignity to the song and exhilarates the *rasikas*.

> [Long back, I went for inspection to a far-off village accompanied by two colleagues. Too many pursuing mongrel dogs made it a hell for us wherever we went, barking hoarse in *ati tara sthāyi*. It was almost impossible to do our work. Casually I remarked to the local gentleman, 'Perhaps there are too many dogs here'. He just smiled away my remark stating, 'Not so, Sir. Today, two or three outside dogs have come! Hence all the nuisance.'
>
> His subtle allusive abuse or defence is clear. Were we not forced to swallow it? That is the standard of rustic allegorical retort.]

***

'I am the Seed', *Mēḷakarta* Scheme claims?

Yaccāpi sarvabhūtānām bījam tad aham, Arjuna *I*
Na tadasti vina yatmyānmayā bhūtam carācaram *II*

(Whatsoever is the seed of beings, that also am I. O Arjuna, there is no being that can exist without me.) –*Bhagawad Gita* X 39

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

A like claim has with all justification been put forth by Venkatamakhin, author of *Mēḷakarta* Scheme since no *rāga* could, nor has been shown to, derive its source outside its framework. The renowned author of the Scheme asserts that the number of *mēḷa rāgas* is seventy-two, nothing more and nothing less. These main ***mēḷa rāgas* are the seeds** out of which the thousands of *janya rāgas* have been springing forth. It is significant that the number of *janya rāgas* has been proliferating as fast as, and keeping pace with, the explosive increase in human population in India! And it is to the verdant credit of the *mēḷa* concept that fresh formulations of *janya rāgas* continue to flow out of the principal *rāgas* thanks to the perennial *manōdharma* of talented musicologists and *vāggēyakāras*. The rain of formulation of *rāgas* and songs may have receded now and then but at no time drizzling has been absent. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar's *Mēḷarāgamālika Cakra* song specifying each of the 72 *mēḷas* and compositions of Kotiswara Ayyar, D. Pattammal, Dr. Balamurali Krishna, etc in each of the 72 *mēla rāgas* are worth a mention. Belakavadi Srinivasa Ayyangar composed likewise and won the prize offered by the Maharaja of Mysore. Kotiswara Ayyar's songs have been sung by the eminent S. Rajam in L.P. for the benefit of learners and connoisseurs. Sri Venkateswara Devasthanam, Pittsburgh, U.S. has brought out forty cassettes covering lessons from *saraḷi variśai* to the *mēḷakarta* system sung by the eminent Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana.

That v. Mela : Hindustani music has ten *thats* while Carnatic music has seventy-two *mēḷas*. The number of *thats,* considered insufficient, is suggested to be raised to 32 by adapting Carnatic *mēḷas*. *Madhuvanti* now placed under the *that Todi* is suggested to be placed under *Dharmāvati mēḷa*. Likewise *Ahir Bhairav* now under *Bhairav that* could come *Chakravaka mēḷa*. Who is to bell the cat and take on and lay down the Code?

[Pandit Harindra to *Phoenix*].

***

Madame Fame:

Barring exceptions, 'Madame Fame' is a demanding, fickle, jealous and possessive concubine. Giants in the world of music had been marginalized and discarded heartlessly by her to languish and lead miserable lives like a Napoleon [1769-1821] in his last days. Simili Sundaram Ayyar, Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar, Palani Subramania Pillai and many others deserved much more patronage. They sat more than warranted in the auditorium, listened and heard, not infrequently with inward disapproval, dismay and disenchantment, musical immaturity on the dais being lauded and applauded! The same has been the case with many composers whose compositions have not seen the light of the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

day but are still-born. Fortunately the captivating compositions of Uthukadu Venkatasubba Ayyar, innocently left in the attics and lofts of the family house came to the notice of Nidamangalam Krisnamurti Bhagavatar who did yeoman service to bring the delightful songs to the notice of musicians and dancers who in turn took to them with all the warmth of a virgin lover meeting, after a disconcerting search, the lost beloved. Ghanam Krisna Ayyar's compositions too have not received due notice. Annamacharya's exquisite songs are still to be favoured in spite of the efforts of the Tirumalai Tirupati Devasthanams. There are scores of such cases.

John Keats [1795-1821] of immortal fame, who lived for a bare 26 years only, brings out succinctly and expressively the secret behind the gimmicks of Madame Fame thus;

'Fame, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease.'

'She is gipsy, will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content without her.
A very gipsy is she! Repay her scorn for scorn;
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu.–
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.'

How many tribal children dance with native grace and rustic elegance, gay abandon, adorable naivete and artistic simplicity! How nimble and eloquently versatile are their movements – *añga* and *mukha abhinaya*! How their supple naked legs and bare undisguised hands move unfettered with untaught natural elegance and grace and how sweet is their native melody enjoying all the charms of mellifluence, sweep and range - all done effortlessly in lavish unthought of variations! **And all for just a paisa!** And these are being re-enacted and replayed by professionals **for lakhs! Art,** how cruel art thou! Why deny the due to nature's children entitled to it but extend the benefit to those who just reproduce xerox versions of the same?

In this context, how true and immaculately accurate was Thomas Gray when he wrote:

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
Hands that might have waked to ecstasy the living lyre!

The same poet also felt constrained to warn **'Ambition'** not to mock at their useful

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

toil and **Grandeur** not to hear with disdainful smile the short and simple annals of such unfortunate, unknown and unsung artistes. Shall we shed a tear or two as our tribute to those unwept and unsung artistes, who were probably the unrecognized patriarchs of the art!

'Patriarchs, to Fortune and Fame unknown,
Fair Science frowned on their humble birth
And Melancholy marked them for her own! –[After Thomas Gray]

Initial waves of the catchy music of such uninitiated rustics engulf one's emotions and virtually enslave the listener instantaneously. That is its prime merit and hidden strength. This impact may not be sustained for long, it is true. After all every street-singer is not born a K.B. Sundarambal or a K.C. Dey with their matchless virgin musical voice and alluring presentation. No wonder that the ruler of Mysore, Jaya Chamaraja Wodeyar was so fascinated and literally captivated by the lilting tune of a street-singer that he felt the urge to ask Mysore Vasudevacharya to run up to her, learn the tune and sing it for him! The poor *vidwan* had to run after the street-singer and learn it after considerable persuasion, as **she would not accede to part with her only modest asset** and succeeding in a final bid striking a barter to surrender his costly laced upper cloth! Likewise Bidaram Krisnappa, in dire straits while young, had to run to a temple and sing for alms. Fortunately he attracted the attention of a well-meaning patron. And he soared to dizzy heights. Even Pandit Ravi Shankar [now a Bharat Ratna of eternal glory] had to fight in earlier days against the pangs of ill luck. Sure many a flower is born to blush unseen and waste its fragrance in the desert air of non–recognition.

***

Scientific approach:

'India is perhaps the only nation, Greece excepted, which had probed and investigated independently in a scientific manner the general laws of evolution of languages. More than this, they had made considerable advances in arts, astronomy, algebra, arithmetic, botany and medicine not to forget grammar long before some of these sciences were cultivated by the most ancient nations of Europe', wrote Sir Monier-Williams in *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* [OUP 1872].

The songs of the Carnatic Music Trinity is the culmination of musical and linguistic excellence and eloquence of the times. If Tyagaraja specialized in propagating Rama *bhakti*, *dharma* and philosophy, Dikṣitar excelled in travelogue, astrology and *agamic* codes while Syama Sastri is known for his absolute surrender to and remarkable

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

bhakti-soaked melody imploring Goddess Kamaksi for her grace. The core of Indian music being Divinity, the scope for their composition, elucidation, exploration and delineation was sky-high, the only constraint being the individual composer's *manōdharma*, i.e., creativity, ingenuity, vision and intuition. If several composers conquered the heights of excellence, musicians too not only had not lagged behind, but had enriched the scope and content of songs with their exquisite, captivating *manōdharmic* rendition. Many who had excelled are immortals whose musical legacy is re-experienced by posterity. As Raghava Menon says,

> 'There is a message that voice leaves in the soul of the listener a memory like the ubiquitous murmur of surf, long after the *sangatis* are forgotten.'

It is an interesting and revealing fact that the voice of a musician leaves its enduring print and unassailable impact on the sensitive canvas of the eternal soul which technical phrases of rendition may not! Sangita Kalanidhi R.K.Srikantan avers, 'Music is joy without exultation, passionate without any loss of serenity and that great music induces rapture of body and mind that brings tears to eyes.' Basically, voice is senior to techniques and reaches the listener much in advance than the reception of techniques, acceptance and their assimilation. Melodic voice effectively conveys, transmits and communicates emotions – *bhāva* and *rasa* – which conjure and conquer mind and heart, leaving its lasting impact on the listener. Emotions even when unarmed with ancillary attributes like techniques are kindled by voice. Voice straightaway addresses itself to cognoscente and lay while techniques may plant interest in varying degrees. This is indeed a ticklish subject worthy of consideration. Without that radiant, slow and steady rendition with a feminine and nasal twang in his voice which shone brightly touching hearts and heads of listeners, the music of Musiri Subramania Ayyar might not have taken such deep roots in the hearts of the people. The reposeful tenor, tempo and rendition poured out pathos eliciting tears. Similarly without that subtle enslaving mystic sweetness in the *nāda* - sound - of his nagaswara rendition, Rajarathinam's *Tōdi* or S.G. Kittappa's presentation of *Kōḍayile iḷaippāṟṟikoḷḷum* would not have left their enduring imprint in the minds of *rasikas*. Without that *soukhyam* [conferring measured solace and peace] in her voice, Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi might not have been crowned the Queen of Melody and driven the Father of the Nation to declare and affirm, 'Better her prose than music of others'.

Wizard Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar has said, 'Those who have **practised Carnatic music can easily understand and practise European or Hindustani music,** while it has always been difficult for the votaries of other systems of music to understand Carnatic music since in Carnatic music the distinguishing features of the other systems had been incorporated,' This accounts for the large number of southern musicians establishing

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

themselves as top performers in the northern system while the reverse is absolutely poor!

S.V.K., an authority and critic of stature, raises the issue:

> **'Which is to be preferred – *saṅgita jñāna* expressed through an ill-nourished voice or a commanding melodic voice purveying music with softness of touch?'**

His wise answer is that only if *saṅgita jñāna* is inextricably wedded to a melodic voice, the revelations of music can be stupendous. Good voice attracts all – more particularly the common man. Pure *jñāna* without a melodic voice to convey, transmit or give expression to is just a reservoir with copious storage but with no sluices or outlets or the sun entirely screened by dark clouds.

❋❋❋

Approach to Music:

> Some music can be tasted and discarded;
> Some shunned; some to be swallowed;
> Select few are to be chewed and digested.
> The last is to be experienced forever.
> **No robber is more efficient than music to steal hearts!'**
>
> –Francis Bacon *On Study and Books* [as modified].

❋❋❋

Current Trends and Morarji Desai:

'Our music is a part of our culture and it is our duty to preserve it. Time and again people complain about current trends. Our films today have less of India and more of James Bond and pop music.'

Prime Minister Morarji Desai made the cryptic truthful observation:

> 'Film is the only trade where you negotiate without first checking the product, which is shown much later after exchange of money and that too in a dark theatre! –Music Director Naushad Ali in *The Hindu* 25 09 1998

'Music is treated as though it were a mere science, a matter merely of arithmetic, of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

fractions and time intervals. **This, it is not.'**

–Raghava R. Menon in his *Magic of the Rāga*

***

Lakṣaṇa and *Lakṣya*:

'In the course of the evolution of our music, great masters had felt the need for systematic training and discipline and established certain norms; a grammar of music was put in place. Times change but norms and grammar do not. They are steadfast. Every attempt to change them is bound to fail!'

–Ustad Fahimuddin Khan Dagarin the *Times of India* [July 4, 1998]

It is true that grammar does not change on par with and as often as changes occur in times, tastes and trends. Grammar is passionately conservative and it is, in essence, its inherent strength like the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India. But it could not remain stagnant either which might endanger its relevance and utility. It has to imbibe and reflect basic changes which creep in, have come to stay and have stood the test of time. Thus *lakṣaṇa* is not totally divorced of *lakṣya* and it re-orientates itself in the light of the changes assimilating the essential and acceptable and vital items. Total stagnancy is foreign to arts and is antagonistic to the very concept of art. There have been periodical exercises to re-orient and ensure that *parampara* or *sampradāya* is not dead wood but is invested with fresh looks and flavour reflecting the wisdom and glory of the past and the aspirations and essentials of the present.

'One of the beautiful features of Indian music is that nothing, no form, no style is ever forgotten completely and abandoned. Rather, these forms and styles are modified and incorporated into the new system so that our music is built up in layers and each layer rests on and draws on that beneath it', says Pandit Ravi Shankar very appropriately.

***

Unmusical ills:

'*Swara* singing, like *rāga ālāpana,* is part of *manōdharmic saṅgitam* but a vast majority of artistes has made it a cheap and mechanical exercise devoid of musical value or

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

imagination with a percussive slant designed to cash in on the vigorous support of the drum. Expressive melodic quality is ignored.

'Unprecedented proliferation of artistes has brought in its wake an unprecedented volume of sub-standard music with a pre-determined assault of *swaras;* they avoid reposeful pauses. The fact is that they have neither musical involvement nor the voice culture to evoke serenity.'

–N.M.Narayanan

❋❋❋

Unmusical souls:

Vihinah Sāhitya saṅgita kala
Sākṣāt paśu puccha vanahinah *I*
Trumam ma khadannapi jīvamanastadh bhāgatēyam
Paramam paśūnām *II*

[None is there who could resist the lure of music.
One not so lured is but a cow *sans* tail and horns – a mere animal!
This animal, however, thrives without consuming grass!
Cows are blessed thereby!]

This description, yet another assertion of a fact repeatedly stressed by our bards, is by the eminent **Mahakavi Bhartruhari** in his *Nīti Satakam* on the vital role of music in the life of man. The Mahakavi humourously adds how these animals in human form act as benefactors too. Saint Tyagaraja echoes the same view in his song *Ānanda Śāgara* [*Garudadhwani*] in which he is unequivocal in declaring that one who does not float in the Ocean of Music is, in truth, a burden to earth [*bhū bhāramē*].

'Lay people prefer light music;
Intellectuals like heavy music;
Philosophical people choose emotional music;
Spiritual people favour divine music.

–Aenaid Khan

'Music is the Language of Emotions.
It may be degraded and made the servant of base emotions;
It may be poor, frivolous or bad;
So give the people good music, elevate, purify and
Sanctify their hearts with wholesome creative emotions.'

–[Anonymous song quoted by Sangita Kalanidhi
Mudicondan Venkatarama Ayyar]

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Unfair Criticism: Buddha:

'It is as a man who looks up and spits at Heaven.
The spittle does not besmirch the Heaven; but what?
It comes back and defiles his own person.'
–The Prince of Wisdom, venerable Buddha.

Jealous remarks and unfair criticism share the same fate and betray the personality of the authors only. He who tars others does not whiten himself! *Vide* page 453 of *A Garland*.

***

Bernard Shaw:

On Classical Music:

'As a rule by the time a manager has experience enough to make him as safe a judge of plays, he begins to be thrown out in his calculations by the slow and constant change of public tastes and by his own growing calculations,'

[Stalwart senior musicians of stature and musical profundity draw far less crowds than up-coming artistes – not for any reason of diminution in musical appeal but for obsession with unreal attractions which are difficult to fathom. Historic temples of marvellous fame are frequented by fewer people while *ad hoc* road-side creations which come into existence overnight gather huge crowds. Public tastes and patronage are as nebulous and melodramatic as stock exchange bullish and bearish trends.]

'Unity is fatal to drama; for every drama must present a conflict.
The end may be reconciliation or destruction but conflict is indispensable.
No conflict, no drama', observed Shaw in his laudable wisdom.

[Unlike drama, concerts have an integrated approach, procedure and programme where the aim is a perfectly balanced blend of harmony, melody, of *rāga, bhāva, tāla*, etc., all vying with each other to present a homogenous, soothing, comforting and satisfying composite presentation. **Unity is *sine quo non* in concerts while conflict is vital to drama. Drama appeals to head and emotions while classical music appeals to the heart and the soul. If there be any conflict in a concert, it is drama and not concert; it fails in its aim.]**

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

On Success:

> 'Playwriting and theatrical management are businesses like other businesses depending on the patronage of great numbers of very ordinary customers. When the managers and authors study the wants of these customers, they succeed; when they do not, they fail.'
>
> *–Arms and the Man*

[This applies *in toto* to management of music concerts, sabhas, academies and other institutions as well, as they prosper only by pleasing the sponsors. Sponsorship is commercial-oriented normally and hence more often for crowd-pulling events and not necessarily for quality and grade.]

❋❋❋

Bhagavatam inspired the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru:

'No better than a dead man's hands, though they wear bracelets of shining gold, are the hands of him who does not employ them to worship Hari. The head of him, though adorned with silk headgear or diadem, who does not prostrate himself before Mukunda, is but a burden to him.' [II. iii.].

[In his song *Bhakti biccha miyave* [*Sankarābharanam*], Saint Tyagaraja avers that a worldly-minded person even with scholarly attainments is just a corpse dressed in lace turban and adorned with precious stones. The point and emphasis on *bhakti* have been elucidated in many of his songs. Of course this theme has been significantly stressed in much of the literary and musical output in India in all languages as spiritual pursuit has been the sheet anchor and *summum bonum* of all activities, more particularly, intellectual.]

❋❋❋

Liberty: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar thundered:

V.D. Savarkar was a prince among patriots. It is a pity that his life has not been adequately explained to the youth of the country. Here he speaks:

'Love is the only link between man and God. But Love needs Liberty, the liberty to love! How can a man love in a state of slavery? Slavery can best be removed by will and determination. The day a man or a race determines to be free, freedom comes

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

to him or it in no time. This is the gospel truth Guru Ramdas inculcated in Shivaji. It is therefore correct to call Mazzini as Ramdas of Italy and Guru Ramdas as Mazzini of Maharaṣtra!'

Note: Mazzini [c.1805-1872] was an Italian patriot and a republican. He agitated for the liberation of Italy and spent many years in exile.

The same thought finds emphasis in an inimitable song of Saint Tirinavukkarasar [Appar] – *vide* pages 276-7 *Yet Another Garland*. Mahakavi and patriot Subramania Bharati [1992-1921] went eloquent even three decades before India became free singing songs of freedom and celebrations! 'Some village Hamden .... guiltless of his country's blood!' [Thomas Gray]. None can forget the impressionable patriotic song, *Siraichālai enna seyyum*? [What can the prison do?] Times change but noble urges, thoughts and actions do not! They are eternal. The *Bhagawad Gita* urges the same. **Great Minds at all times think alike, no wonder.**

***

Where do artistes [musicians and dancers] meet?

'As in some oriental play sublime
All characters, dead or living,
In epilogue meet!
Thus actors, we innumerable all, once more shall meet
On history's copious stage before the great
Applauding audience of Humanity!'

These words of the great veteran patriot, Savarkar, whose life was an impressive saga of absolute sacrifice and total surrender and self abnegation as a true patriot finds fortunate reflection and echo in the **preface to this *Garland* series** taken up in 1988. Surely composers, musicians, musicologists, etc of the glamorous past and the enlivening and ever-enlarging musical community of the present do meet, sing and swim in the *Ānanda Sāgara* of the *Garlands*. They turn immortals and live eternally in the golden pages of these *Garlands*, in their songs, in the hearts of *rasikas*.

***

Interest:

This heading does not relate to the province of Shylock but to *bonafide* concern for good things of life. Quite a few evince little interest in Indian Classical music which finds

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

reflection in thin attendance at many concerts though not in the number of concerts which are truly encouraging in metropolitan centres. The area of activity has miserably shrunk from the whole of the country to a few metropolitan centres. Rural centres, which produced wizards, maestros and titans, are truly starved of classical music and concerts. The alternative to classical is disappointing and illusory. A fashionable or professed disinterest in the classical deprives one of the accretion of much good to his personality and his mental health. Gandhiji wrote to a young trainee-girl on August 11, 1947:

'Your saying that you have no interest in the place is itself enough to show that you have still a lot to learn. Interest is everywhere where there is scope for service. **Learn, therefore to take interest.**'

Though what he said did not relate to interest in music, it is equally applicable to complaints of lack of interest in classical music. May the wavering take heart.

❋❋❋

The Wild and the Melodious: Connoisseur regrets!

'We hear some music coming from other countries. Music Michael, they hail; Jackson, they say. It is all wild shouting and to hear it, lakhs assemble and tall publicity is given. Amidst it all, whether it is Mali's flute or Rajarathinam's nagaswara, when it begins to waft and scatter its sweet melody, the former disappears without leaving any trace of it!'

–Chief Minister Kalaigñar Karunanidhi
at the Music Academy, Chennai.

❋❋❋

Ocean of Musical Affluence and *Ātmānanda Saṅgita Upāsana:*

Vipancya gāyanti slōka in *Soundarya Lahari* shows that goddess Saraswati plays vipanci [vina] singing simultaneously on *Siva Lila.* She is thus *vaiṇika-gāyaka.* Vina with Saraswati is called gaccapi while Narada's is called magati. Appar, the apostle, exclaims with pride that [his] Lord Siva plays vina well.– *Em iṟai nal vīṇai vāsikkumē. Pradōṣa Stōttara* refers to Lord Śiva dancing before Goddess Parvati on *pradōṣa* days with orchestra of celestials.–

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Saraswati on vina called vallaki,
Indira on flute,
Brhma handling cymbals and
Laksmi providing vocal music.

'A veritable orchestra by titans! It would appear that Nandikeswara, the '*astana vidwan* in percussion', perhaps forgot to play having lost himself in the delectable divine environment. [We have heard that Palghat Mani used to keep silent without playing being attentive to and absorbed by the music of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar forgetting the need for his providing accompaniment.] This perhaps necessitated Lord Visnu to step in with mrdangam. Or probably Nandi was assigned duty elsewhere akin to the twelfth man in cricket! Parvati is the Presiding Deity and *rasike* at this exalted performance of her matchless and wonderful spouse and Cosmic Dancer. *Saṅgita rasikē, Rājamātaṅgi, Rājasyāmaḷa, Bhāva rāga tāla mōdini* and a host of honorifics are attributed to Her indicative of supremacy as a connoisseur! *Syāmaḷa Daṇḍakam, Navaratnamāla, Sambhu Naṭana Aṣṭakam,* etc., extol the musical affluence and *swarūpa* of Devi. Stating so, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi advised :

'We can easily secure Her blessings with *saṅgīta upāsana.*'

Such messages indicate that *saṅgīta upāsana* [dedicated musical prayer or *bhajan* comprising *sruti, laya, saṅgīta* and *nṛtyam*] secures the grace of God and elevates the devotee to *Īśwara sānnidhānam.*

As usual, the Paramacharya clarifies and sets at rest possible doubts on this:

'Where is that *sannidhānam*, one may wonder. It is in our hearts.
All it means is that the *nādōpāsaka* attains *ātmānanda!*'

***

Darkness after Glittering Light:

Tamils had seen the most advanced, perfected and effulgent state of arts and language even in prehistoric times and the dawn of human knowledge. The earliest glimpse one gathers is itself one of the most exalted, fit to be placed on the highest honoured pedestal. *Tolkāppiam,* the earliest of immortal extant works, indicates that music and prose developed simultaneously to highly skilled and knowledgeable level. The significant prevailing culture of the period finds illustration in *Tolkāppiam* 95, which defines the basic needs of people:

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Deivam, uṇarve, ma, maram, puli, paṛai,
Seidi, yaḻin pagudiyōdu tagalee
Avvagai piṛavum karuvena moḻibha.'

PTR Kamala Tyagarajan says, 'It is significant that percussion [*paṛai*] and harp or lute [*yaḻ*] are specified as vital essentials to life along with god, etc. This is, in truth, very astounding and remarkable indicating the very pristine level of art-intensive culture and civilization. *Paṇ* [*rāga*], *yaḻ, paṛai* and many such musical terms find constant mention in ancient literature of the tamils. *Śilappadikāram* excels other works in its profoundly erudite treatment and portrayal of music, dance, etc. It is intriguing how such a glorious past could be succeeded by a period of darkness:

> 'After the eighth century, good works had not been written and whatever had been written were not patronized and developed. In the lives of tamilians, stagnation commenced from then on.'
>
> –PTR. Kamala Tyagarajan

> ***'Iśai iyal* failed to grow and there was darkness – *Iśai śorkaḷ ellām vaḷarciurāmal varaṇḍu iruṇḍu kiḍakkiṉṟana'***
>
> –P.K. Sundaram

'Words relating to music/musicology failed to grow and lay in darkness uncared for.' A distressing interregnum, indeed. But many an ancient nation has undergone this cyclical prosperity and adversity.

***

Ancient Practice – Norms still kept alive:

At concerts, instruments follow the principal vocalist with perceptible faith and respect and it is the accepted mandatory concert *dharma.* It is striking and startling to find that it had been virtually the same in ancient times too. In the *Viragu viṟṟa paḍalam* of *Tiruviḻayāḍal Purāṇam*, it is seen:

'Parundodu niḻarpōkkenna
Yaḻ narambiśaiyin śellaviśainda inniśai' – *Paraṇjōtiar*

Perunkāthai and *Jīvaka Cintāmaṇi* confirm the principle:

'Miḍarum narambum iḍai terivindrip
Paravai niḻalir pirar pāṭtīyac
Śeviccuvai yamirdam iśaittalin mayaṅgi.' – *Perunkādai* 14 275-7

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'Pavaḷac cevvāi
Tiruvan pādināl
Narambōdu vīṇai nāvin
Navindradō enruṛindal.' – *Jīvaka Cintāmani*

This is what is euphemistically called the *dharma patni* style of accompaniment at concerts where the accompanists closely follow the rendition of the principal artiste and strive for his success with total identity and team work to ensure that the captain wins and others share the joy and credit. Here is further confirmation of this ideal and norm before our ancients:

'If voice and yaḻ should function like vulture and its shadow, voice should come down to the level of the yaḻ as yaḻ cannot bring out all *gamakas*. Though Gandarvadattai, the heroine, sang extremely well, she lost in the contest!

'Parundum niḻalumpōr pāttum eḻalum
Tirundu Jivakarke ṡerndadendranni
Virundāga yaḻ panni vinaitān torpāḻ
Iruṇḍal iḻamayil pōl ēndhiḻaivērkaṇṇāl.'
– Jīvaka Kandaruva - 7730

***

Tala – Etymology:

Music is like a rose flower. If *tāla* is its colour, fragrance is its melody. Both are *sine quo non* to make rose what it is. Call it what you like, rose smells the same, is alright for the name. But *sans* its colour or its fragrance, it is not rose. Borrowing the analogy on a different theme from the pen of scholar T.K.Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, only if the golden wheel of melody runs smoothly on the silver rail-track of *laya,* music will please, satisfy, conjure, thrill and last. If *rāga* is the fundamental element of melody in Indian music, *tala* is the essential element of time and rhythm. Tradition has it, says Pandit Ravi Shankar, that the world *taḻa* has its origin in the syllables:

Ta – from *tāṇḍava,* the Cosmic Dance of Lord Śiva; and
Ḻa – from *lasya*, the feminine counterpart of *tāṇḍava* with its origin in the dance of Devi Parvati.

Thus masculine vigour and vibrancy are matched and wedded to feminine beauty and grace! When the two blend harmoniously, one sees god in music and sings with Rabindranath Tagore, **'O God. Thou art as simple as a song'.**

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Laya:

In the fullest extension of the idea projected in the sanskrit verse,

Vākārtaviva sampṛktav, Vākarta pratibartaye
Jagataphpitarau vandē Pārvati Paramēśvarau

i.e., just as word and its meaning are inseparable, *rāga* and *laya* march hand in hand in perfect unison to elevate music to celestial heights. It is *laya* which enables and encourages the child to learn rhymes and the common people to appreciate folk songs, like

Kāvēri Ten Peṇṇai Pālāru, Tamiḻ kaṇḍadōr Vaigai Poruṇainadi. [or]
Twinkle Twinkle little Star [or]
Bhaja Gōvindam or any simple song or *slōka* generally.

Word and its meaning, body and soul, seed and flower, fire and smoke march inseparably together, and the presence of one *ipso facto* connotes the vital presence of the other too, as highlighted in the tamil verse of Nakkirar:

Uraiyum poruḻum, Udalum uyirum
Viraiyum malarum, vimmi ṣenravaranre.

Even so, *laya* and music too are inseparable.

'*Laya* is a highly abstract term. It can only be felt and experienced and is not easy to write about! *Laya mādurya* has been very aesthetically employed in the compositions of Musical Trinity. *Laya* is present in both *kalpita saṅgita* and *Kalpana saṅgita*. It can only be experienced like colours, smell, touch, etc', says Bangalore K. Venkataram. It is a comprehensive term that includes in its connotation *tāla, kālapramāna*, *lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya* and everything else so far as they relate to time measure.

'The term *laya* has a *virāt swarūpa* and is to be experienced like colour, smell, touch, etc.' –[*Phoenix* 4-3]

'*Laya suddham* is the term frequently used in connection with the music of Nayana Pillai, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Chittoor Subramania Pillai, D.K.Pattammal and others. What exactly does this term mean? Dictionary gives the meaning 'union, absorption, concentration, time'. It is said to denote musical time, the rhythmic aspect of Indian music, the degree of speed, i.e., the time interval between two counting units of a *tāla*.' To a question proposed by maestro Karaikudi Mani, B.R.C. Iyengar has said,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'To understand and enjoy the beauty of *layam* one has to possess sufficient knowledge in that area, a sense of selective hearing. For example, I have got the recording of a great vidwan of the *swarajati Kamāksi*, in which the *pallavi* has been rendered in seven ways, each in a different *naḍai*, to understand which, in-depth knowledge is vital'. –[*Layamani Layam* 6/33]

***

Mysticism in *Kṛṣṇa Lila Taraṅgini:*

'Narayana Tirtha was closely associated with *Nāma Siddhānta* tradition. He identified himself with the supreme force and saw in every aspect around him, the Supreme Principle. A staunch and profoundly inspired *advaitin,* he based his compositions, on the gripping *Daśamaskandha* of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. His *Dṛśya Prabandha* is the result of deep meditation on Kṛṣṇa...*Kṛṣṇānubhava*...Far from any trace of rank eroticism, he has elevated Kṛṣṇa's interaction with *gōpis* to the level of pure *advaita vēdānta*.'

–B. Natarajan

***

Eloquence in composition:

Genius, in its *manōdharmic* flights in quest of innovative manoeuvres, has presented different structures in composition such as *kṛiti, kīrtan, varṇam, padam, jāvali, tillāna, rāgamālika* and the like. *Rāgamālika* is just a garland of *rāgas* beautifully woven together in *sāhitya, rāga and laya*. The different segments of a *rāgamālika* are set in different *rāgas* and in a *rāgatālamālika* in different *rāgas* and *tālas*. It is said that *rāgamālika* was earlier called *rāgakadambakam. Rāgamālikas* are in different patterns.

a. *Pallavi* and a*nupallavi* set in one *rāga* with *charanas* in different *rāgas* without c*hittaswaras* as in the piece *Enakkun irupadam ninaika varam arulvāi*.

b. *Rāgamālikas* with or without *chittaswaras*; and with or without *rāga mudras*.

c. *Rāgamālikas* where after each *charana,* the *rāga* of the *pallavi* is recalled and resumed as in *Bhāvayami Raghurāmam.*

d. *Rāgamālika* with the initial part of *chittaswara* in the *rāga* of the preceding passage followed by the *rāga* of the *charana* with the *makutam* in the *rāga* of the *pallavi* in fast tempo as in *Kamalajasya of Swati Tirunal.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

e. *Rāgamālika* with *chittaswara* in reverse *rāga seriatim – vilomakrama chittaswara.*

Dr. M. Hariharan and Dr. Gowri Kuppuswamy state that ancient treatises like *Bṛhaddēśi* and *Saṅgita Ratnākara* have dealt with these though the nomenclature adopted was different and that there are *rāgamālikas* with 108,72,27,18,16,14,9, etc *rāgas*. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar's *Mēḷa Rāgamālika* is the most prominent. Of course, musicians present *rāgamālikas* of *swaras* alone or *tanam* alone or any mixture including *rāga ālāpana mālika, rāgamālikas* in *padam, tillānas*, etc. The Dikṣitar family had a particular fancy for *rāgamālikas* and *Melattur Virabhadriah*, the trail-blazer was, but the preceptor to Ramaswami Diksitar! Other *ragamalika* composers include

King Shahaji	Swati Tirunal
Manambuchavadi Venkatasubba Ayyar	Ponniah Pillai
Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar	Papanasam Sivan and
Ambhujam Ammal	

Among top composers who did not resort to *ragamalikas* are mentioned Tyagaraja, Syama Sastri, Subbaraya Sastri, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Kotiswara Ayyar, etc. Some pieces originally set to a single *rāga* had been subsequently tuned as *rāgamālikas* with immense impact on their popularity like *Bhāvayami Raghurāmam* of Swati Tirnal, *Enakkun irupadam* of Arunachala Kavirayar and *Jaya Jaya Gōkula Bāla* of Narayana Tirtha, which were originally only in *Saveri, Souraṣtram* and *Kurinji rāgas*. Of course, individual musicians do turn a piece into a *rāgamālika* or the reverse of it.

Elegance in composition is product of *manōdharmic* flights of inspired imagination, perhaps a congenital virtue in those who are born poets, One day, venerable **Appayya Diksita,** hailed as the composer of 104 works [*Chaturadhika sataprabandhakarta*], saw Lord Nataraja being anointed with sandal paste all over [*abhiṣēka* or *alaṅkāra*]. He wondered how the Lord on that chilly day could tolerate such, several cold attributes. His poetic eminence brought forth a conjuring verse expressing solicitude and concern for the Lord meaning:

'O, Lord of Chidambaram, Siva! How do you withstand such abundance of chill with Ganga and the Moon on your crest, clammy serpents coiled on your arms and legs, Himavan's daughter dripping with compassion seated on your left and to add to all these, sandal paste being anointed profusely all over your body?'
[His brilliant scholarship finds the answer too.]

'Well, I see how! You have made your abode in my [oven] hot heart boiling with misery!'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Fertile minds of eminent poets carry out instant dissection and reflection of absolute beauty and unravelled truths. The world is sustained on their poetical wizardry!

Understanding adherence to *sāhitya*: Here are the opinions of two veteran, top, distinguished Sangita Kalanidhis, which show varying perceptions that are interesting:

'The President of the Conference said that the language of the songs [*kṛitis*] should be such as is understood by audience. Before considering the question, I desire that we should consider the place of ***sāhitya* in Carnatic music.** Of course in instrumental music much importance is not given to it. Even in vocal music *sahitya* figures very little in *ālāpana* or in *swara, tāna* and *pallavi*. In Carnatic music, *sāhitya* had always a place essentially **secondary or ancillary to *saṅgita***. If one looks at the compositions of the Trinity, one finds that more prominence has been given to the musical structure than to the words. Even if one takes away the *sāhitya*, the music would still be captivating. **The vital thing in music is the *nāda* and not the *sāhitya*.**' This is the view of the wizard, whose musical emphasis was more on the *lakṣya* aspect though authentically *lakṣana*-based, viz., **Maharajapuram** Viswanatha Ayyar at the Music Academy on December 22, 1945.

'*Saṅgita* and *sāhitya* are like the flower and its fragrance. When the one harmoniously combines with the other, art is no doubt at its eloquent best. *Sāhitya* is as important as *sruti* and *laya*. Sangita and *sāhitya* are both equally important and have been fostered and cultivated so by our elders.' So said **Chembai** Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar at the Academy on December 21, 1957.

Viswanatha Ayyar was a cavalier in the field, who wielded a magical wand to sway the audience with his magnificent *manōdharma*. Chembai was a *sampradāya vidwan* whose voice was his *forte* and whose style was different. These account for the difference in perceptions.

***

Mark Twain on 'Classic':

'A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read!'

This is something like the statement of a prominent Afro-American sportsman that 'everyone wants to go to Heaven but none wants to die!' *Caturdandi Prakāśika*, for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

instance, is a basic treatise on *mēḷakarta rāgas* but many a musician could not have felt the need to read it at all. After all, many of them are like retailers, as a gentleman said. The tribe of eminent musicologists too is dwindling.

❋❋❋

Lalgudi Jayaraman on Trinity and Music:

'The special feature of the *kṛitis* of Muthuswami Dikṣitar is that one *swara* structure in a song is not repeated elsewhere. Syama Sastri's songs reflect the fact that he was a Child of Divine Mother ever seeking Her mercy and grace and they enjoy the stamp of *laya*. In the *kṛiti* structure of Tyagaraja, *pallavi* is mostly in *madhya sthāyi* with a variety of *saṅgatis,* the *anupallavi* is in the *tara sthāyi* embellished with melodic phrases. The confluence of *anupallavi* with *pallavi* where the melody and lyric glide into and consummate the musical statement of the *pallavi* is a gem of musical impact.'

'Purandaradasa is to Carnatic music what Hippocrates is to modern medicine.'

'The *vadi* and *samvadi* element in our system of music is the key to *rāgas* gaining popularity. If *Kalyāni, Tōdi, Sankarābharanam, Bhairavi* and *Kambhōji* do not suffer staleness, it is most certainly due to this *poruttam* [matching].'

Note: The dramatic troupes of Nawab Rajamanickam [Madurai Original Boys], etc had on their roles dozens of youngsters whose only work was to daily attend all rehearsals and the dramas. This ***gurukula*** system helped the boys to imbibe the styles without effort in a year or two and they blossomed into memorable actors. There was a surfeiting galaxy indeed then! The lavish output of celebrated dramatists in earlier decades and the total dearth of them now are due to such causes.

❋❋❋

Ban *Swara* Rendition?

'The new Carnatic professional exponents avoid reposeful pauses but keep their voices constantly **rolling** with nominal regard for *sruti*. **Melodic purity is a casualty**. If somebody runs it is because he is afraid to stay where he is, said a master of old. It is true. They lack musical involvement and voice culture.

'*Swara* delineation, like *rāga* elaboration is *manōdharma saṅgitam*. But many due

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

to mechanical exercise devoid of musical value render it cheap. More often, the up and down movements lack imagination and appear more or less memorized versions with a percussive slant. Expressive melodic quality is forgotten. It can be tolerated if the musician compensates it in *rāga* and *kṛiti* rendition. Alas, it is rarely so! Unprecedented proliferation of artistes has brought in its wake an unprecedented volume of sub standard singers equipped with a pre-determined assault on *swaras* with *kuṛaippus* and *kōrvais* to boot. **A ten-year ban on *swara* singing alone will compel artistes to concentrate on deep and expressive artistry.'**

–N.M Narayanan

May the views of the earnest musicologist and critic be taken notice of.

***

Varnam – Origin:

Long back *bharatanāṭya* recitals started with *kavuthuvam,* which is an admixture of *aḍavu* and poetry set to *tāla* and *rāga*. It started with *nṛitta* for the *aḍavu* portion and *abhinaya* for *sāhitya* or poetry part. *Kavuthuvam,* according to some scholars, shaped itself finally into the present *varṇam.*

–N.R. Bhuvarahan

This view raises the question whether music took inspiration from dance or *vice versa.*

***

Padam:

Pada-s are juicy scholarly meaningful slow-moving compositions evocative of *swara* and *tāla* on *śṛiṅgāra* – generally soaked in *madhura bhakti* – with *padanāyakas* being dignified. The script enjoys apparent philosophical meaning. *Vide* pages 442-3 of *Another Garland.* The term is old and is stated to have been used earlier to denote any musical composition. *Śriṅgāra kirtans,* as a distinct type of *padam*, came into vogue in the 15th century C.E. on the advent of the Tallapaka maestros. As this form attained its perfection in the compositions of Kṣētrajña, [17th century], he is hailed as the 'Father of *Śṛiṅgāra padams'*. 'It emerged as a distinct genre with *nāyaka-nāyika* motif, three or more *charanams*, to be sung in slow tempo in *rāgas* reflecting the mood of the *padam.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

These were mostly written on tamil soil. A galaxy of *padam* composers appeared.' [Rajsri Gautam, at Madras Music Academy in 1988] Bharatanatya relies very much on these delectable compositions. 'In a musical composition, a *padam* is viewed in terms of the number of *tāla āvartanas* – 2, 4, 6,8, or any even number.'

–Dr. Salva Krishnamurti.

***

Harikatha [*Kalaksepam*]:

'*Harikatha* finds mention even in *Bhāgavatam*. The exponent was called *kīrtanakara* and the art was initially part of the *bhajana sampradāya*. Marathi *kīrtans* influenced *kālakṣēpa* art initially and from Thanjavur it later spread fast. 'Harikathas commenced with *panchapadi; nirūpaṇa* was the story and songs composed in marathi metres called *saki, dindi, ovi, panchachamaram* and *kekavali* were in use. Compositions in tamil and telugu naturally followed. Thanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar was the pioneer artiste and Gopalakrishna Bharati introduced tamil songs in maṛathi metres.'

– Thanjavur Swaminatha Atreya at the
Madras Music Academy in 1988]

***

Introspection - Regrets:

Purandara Dasa in his song *Mosahodenallo* [*Atana*] says *Muvattu varuṣa mohabdiyalli biddu*, regrets and repents that he had wasted thirty years of his prime life without realization of spiritual enlightenment in pursuit of mundane material ventures. Tyagaraja too regrets likewise in many songs like *Dudukugala* [*Gaula*]. Gopalakrishna Bharati makes his Saivaite apostle, Nandanar cry that he had wasted his life without performing good deeds – *Puṇṇiyam ṣeyyāmal irundēnē*. Eminent souls have turned their pure minds inwards egged on by spiritual urges and were ever vigilant against any lapse.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Maṅgalam

Rāga : Sri Tāla: Ādhi:

Indhina dinave subha dinavu
Indhina vāra subha vāra
Indhina yōga subha yōga
Indhina karaṇa subha karaṇa
Indhina dare subha dare
Indhu Sri Purandara Vitalana
Bhakta sandharśanave namakānandha

Note : [*Indhu Garlandu subha Garlandu!*]

***

Varaḷi rāga – Facts and Myths

'An ancient *prati madhyama, rāgāṅga, sampūrṇa, ṣadja graha, ghana rāga,* it was originally called *Varātti.* In sanskrit, *Varaḷa* means a male bee and *Varaḷi* means a female bee or humming. There is an incorrect view that rendition in *vivadi rāgas* reduces longevity. Myths, stories and apocryphal opinions surround *Varāḷi rāga.* Once the famous Sapthasthanam procession of deities was on. One group was led by the famous composer-musician duo Anai and Ayyavayyar while the other by Tyagaraja. One after another, all left the Bard of Tyagaraja lured by the rendition of the other group and Tyagaraja himself joined it later as he was alone like Robinson Crusoe and he too felt captivated and drawn. The reason was that the other group was singing in the lilting *rāga Varāḷi!* The second myth is that maestro Chowdiah of Mysore physically lifted Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar and did not allow him down till he agreed not to sing in *Varāḷi!*

–Dr. V.V. Srivatsa in *CAC Newsletter.*

Myths play a great part in investing image and grade to all whether it be musician, composer or dancer. *Āhiri rāga* enjoys like myths. Some *rāgas* are reportedly auspicious while others are not! *Varāḷi rāga* is invoked to project *karuṇa rasa* [sympathy, pity].

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IIIC

Women Artistes

The last half a century has witnessed a galloping increase in learned women taking to vocal and instrumental music and practically monopolising the dance panorama which augurs well for the progress and development of the arts. Women are positively best equipped for these as Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati and others have advised.

'*Vēdas* place women on a high pedestal and they consider many women as *mantradrasta*. Woman is considered not only as *Vēdādhikāri* but also as a seer of *Vēdas*. Women were free to attain the highest knowledge. *Vāk* is *vidya* and the goddess of *Vidya* is a woman. *Vāgdēvi* is the goddess of speech.'[K.S.Rama in *Kalyana Kalpataru* 44/12]

It is a positive phenomenon and in tune with what was the prevailing situation even two millennia back in Bharat. May the trend prosper! There is elevated grace, *santam, soukhyam* and *mangalam*.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Interesting Notes, Incidents and Facts

Ākāṣvāni [All India Radio] – Laudable Contribution to Classical Music:

Few are the common grounds or familiar features between the past and the present in the slow but steady growth of Indian music and, more particularly, the Carnatic music from the view-point of patronage. The music-lover may wonder why the progress should be described as slow though steady. The answer lies in the accepted fact that the origin, the earliest itself was so grand that improvement and ornamentation could but be only slow and minimal. But it has been steady as musicologists aver. Patronage in earlier centuries came from rulers of various hues. Rulers of Vijayanagar, Thanjavur, Mysore and Travancore, and to a lesser degree by enthusiastic lesser entities, had made memorable efforts to sustain and develop the art and encourage artistes. Some of them were themselves eminent artistes, composers and musicologists. [It may not be a note in *apaswara* to mention that India had also put up with fortunately quite a few rulers who did everything in their power to suppress and stifle fragrant arts and more particularly music.] With the decline of monarchy and subsequent abolition, zemindars and big landholders stepped in a great way and took on the role of patrons providing commendable help. Zamins and big landholdings too came to be abolished as part of land reforms. Fortunately hindu religion, customs and practices demand inputs of music [vocal and instrumental] as well as percussion and dance on domestic and community festive occasions, for *pujas* at homes as well as at temples, the total strength of which outnumber the human population of many other countries! The grandeur of a marriage or a temple festival was and is still weighed as much by the gala paraphernalia and degree of attendance as by the quantum and grade of the musical menu provided.. Temples, of course, formed the nucleus of service and growth. In this, deltaic belts and temple towns excelled. If Indian music has survived in all its effulgence, it is in no measure due to the marvelous magnificence and magnitude of such patronage. As the twentieth century advanced, this source of support slowly dried up and drifted to corporate bodies, sabhas, and quasi government organizations. It was in this atmosphere, the All India Radio came into existence. It was no small stride but a giant step indeed!

***

Guglielmo Marconi [1874 - 1937] transmitted and received electromagnetic waves in the fading years of the nineteenth century and was honoured with Nobel Prize. It opened

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

up a happy era of fast developing sophisticated communicational facilities. The World Wars saw the needed spurt in expansion and the twenties of the 20th century saw its appearance in India initially through Radio Clubs, Corporation Radios and the Indian Broadcasting Company. Then the All India Radio was formed.

The era of broadcasting regularly commenced on July 23, 1927 with the setting up of the Indian Broadcasting Company with a 1.5 KV mv transmitter at Mumbai. The then Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin rightly observed that it would be a tremendous blessing and boon of real value. In 1936, it came under the authority of the Government of India. In 1952, an ardent lover of classical music, Dr. Balakrishna V. Keskar as Minister of Information took quite a lively interest and from then on All India Radio has made long and remarkable strides in the preservation and development of Indian artistic heritage like classical music, besides education, agriculture, etc. People in far-flung villages are immensely benefited in every aspect.

In earlier decades facilities and opportunities for concerts were minimal mainly dependent on temple festivals and marriages which were but seasonal. The All India Radio was the only forum that could remedy the lop-sided situation and it stepped in a grand measure to do it. It has been making a hefty contribution for the propagation and popularity of Classical music as well as folk music with its daily regulated programmes planned with vision and presented with foresight. This was very timely since this synchronized with the slow and steady migration of ever increasing artistes to urban centres depleting invisibly the artistic atmosphere in rural areas. The radio was the solitary source for music in rural areas apart from the nagaswara rendition at marriages and temples. The impact and value of contribution by radio were immense and massive as it provided opportunities to all categories of musicians systematically and catered to the needs of music-lovers regularly. The village and town panchayats provided public radio centres which were the favourite haunts of musical enthusiasts before the radio and later the television made their appearance in most of the households. All India Radio also broadcasts recordings of eminent musicians of yester decades. Radios expanded their area of service by bringing in devotionals, folk music and many more to cater to diverse tastes and needs.

Inclusion in the panel of artistes by AIR was a recognition of merit and standing. Payments to artistes came to be made on the basis of grades to main artistes and accompanists without distinction unlike sabhas. The doyen of Carnatic music, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar said, 'I had the privilege of singing first on the inaugural day and was paid Rs. fifty which I declined [as too petty, it is presumed]. It was raised to Rs. seventy-five. When the heroine of Shanta Ram's memorable pioneering pictures, Shanta Apte was paid Rs.150/- for her concert while artistes like me were remunerated only with

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Rs.125/-, we protested. Our objection was accepted as genuine. Of course, remuneration has since then been raised for different grades appreciably.'

B.V. Keskar, a person of culture, took genuine interest in the formative years of the radio. He persuaded maestro Srinivasa Ayyar to accept the post of Chief Producer in All India Radio. When the three-year tenure ended and he was asked to continue, Ayyar in his inimitable fashion responded:

> 'Perhaps you listen to my music, or have to sometimes, whether it is an infliction or not. But I could not stand hearing the thousands of tapes [for scrutiny and approval] some tolerable and some unbearable!'

And he bade farewell to All India Radio.

The name *Ākāṣvāṇi* which stands for All India Radio might have been inspired by Poet Rabindranath's special song composed for the inauguration of Calcutta Station when he coined the word.

Punctuality was the key to the administration then as broadcasts were live. Once K. B. Sundarambal rushed to the studio with disheveled hair and unkempt clothes just to be on time, as she had to rush to the station from a funeral! The supreme reigning matinee idol, M. K. Tyagaraja Bhagavatar, who was a classical, trained musician under Alathur Venkatesa Ayyar, snatched the cycle of a postman and rushed to the Station. It was he who introduced revolutionary catchy tunes in films. A trail-blazer indeed! All India Radio was deservedly felicitated for its solid contribution to the sustenance of the classical art by the Music Academy, Chennai.

The energetic Station Director, All India Radio, Chennai, B.R. Kumar adds:

'AIR has allotted substantial time slots for Carnatic music to provide adequate opportunities to all graded artistes at regular intervals and the concerts are very popular. Live concerts on F.M. 1 at 5 p.m. is on stereophonic mode to provide listening feasts. To take radio closer to the listeners, concerts are arranged before invited audience. Ākāṣvāṇi Sangeet Sammelan not only provides additional opportunities to the talented but the performances are broadcast from all the stations in the country. AIR provides extensive coverage of concerts at sabhas too utilizing satellite uplink equipment for noise-free best audio quality.

'Chennai Station of AIR is proud of its huge collection of archival recordings of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

eminent musicians since the fifties of the twentieth century. This precious archival recording will be continued. Generations to come will have the precious opportunity to avail of these and enjoy.'

One can take the horse to the pond but not make it drink, says the old proverb. In this B. R. Kumar has a point that is relevant to the growth of the art and artistes too. He regrets to air his considered, weighty views:

'The younger generation is not evincing as much interest as the previous generations were. wont to do. At most of the public concerts people around seventy years alone are mostly seen and attendance too is too feeble. Where will the upcoming talented young performing artistes on the dais derive motivation from when they do not find people of their own age group before them?'

Here B. R. Kumar looks ahead into the future and perceives the **lurking or apprehended potential danger** that might confront and beset the ancient Art and asks quite relevantly, 'Who would be audience at concerts once the present generation of listeners is gone?' He has a word of **caution**, 'Will the younger generation realize the situation and stir up.'

One may see the echo of Swami Vivekananda's call of the earlier millennium in the earnest plea of Kumar! Temples distribute *prasāda* to attract the young and the devout. But what can concerts distribute *sans* music now? Dr. Sumati Mutarkar, a renowned vocalist cum musicologist, who had served the AIR as Director of Music. has said, 'Of late, I miss the enthusiasm that the Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan used to invoke in our hearts in the 60s and 70s.' The problem is acknowledged by all but the remedy to the ills is yet to be divined! Will it be ever done?]

One comes across speakers painting a glorious picture on the future of Classical Carnatic music on platforms and addresses. Unfortunately they are far off the mark. The entire rural area which acted as the base, nursery, cradle and home of musicians is now bereft of musicians. Metropolitan city has become the sanctuary and this is understandable from the view point of the individual's life and sustenance. Nagaswara which was the prime *maṅgala vādya* is losing its primacy. The radio and the television, if one has both or either, is the only means to hear music in rural areas. *Gurukulavāsa* is dead. Teaching institutions are fashioned after collegiate classes with distinct periods, minimum syllabus, holidays and vacations. There is no teacher to wake up students at 4.30 a.m. for practice and no student too to be woken up. There is no 'Tiger' or 'Patnam' or Tyagaraja to carry the disciples' heart and soul with them. If any teacher now shows solicitude, the student

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

may be nervous feeling that he may be taxed with additional fee or non-musical work. If the teacher adheres to six classes per month, there is much vacuum in between. If he is prepared to take up more than that, the student finds it difficult as he has official and other work to attend to. 'One man, one vocation' is as difficult a proposition in the field now as 'one man, one post' in political life! Renowned Minakshisundaram Pillai may warn Gopalakrishna Bharati, 'Either tamil or music' and make him desert music for the time being. But it is unworkable now.

Further the young generation is admittedly does not fly to take to Classical music since avenues of success, profit and glory are comparatively fewer in it. This statement should not be viewed from the reaction of the few scores of families or individuals who are passionate convinced addicts to it hereditarily or otherwise. A handful shine, Quite a few are successful but the majority are merely 'also ran' cases. Many a talented musician is seen only while attending others' concerts. It is a sad spectacle. 'Being a hero is about the shortest-lived profession in the world', said Will Rogers and he is absolutely correct. Honours more often tend to flow or rush like water continuously to known oceans alone ignoring the large tracts of virgin wet fields in need of that life giving element, They rarely take the form of genuine help to the deserving. Audience attendance at most of the concerts is not happy. A perusal of the farce '*Travails and Tribulations of an Artiste*' in the *Fragrant Garland* [pages 60-63] may help to appreciate the mental anguish and harsh treatment of competent artistes by the volatile attendance.

As is the practice, to probe into the ills of anything in governance, a High Level Committee may be constituted [with members, as usual, who neither attend its meetings nor are interested in the probe except to the extent of adorning the stage on the first day of inauguration and the last day of presentation of a report, more probably not read by many of them like the *Caṭur Daṇḍi Prakāśika* or other works] to go into the ills of the art and artistes and give a report [which may or may not be acted upon].

All India Radio [B R. Kumar] and interested institutions may ponder earnestly.

***

The Last Lullaby!

The child, and in specific cases elderly patients too, are lullabied to sleep. Sweet, soft, soothing, *couka kāla* rendition slowly induces *śānti,* instils *soukhyam* and a condition wherein the *sthūla* - conscious self gets slowly diluted in the ocean of *sūkṣma* state. Music is very occasionally invoked by the knowledgeable to reduce the pangs, pathos and pain

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of the final *adieu* to this planet. It enables the mind to stifle distress a little or fully and elevate itself to a higher plane and linger on the Almighty. Even as the departing soul slips into anonymity, music helps sorrowing kith and kin to bear the pangs and pain of loss less acutely by taking off their minds from the loss. *Nāda* is a sedative drug, a tranquilizer which lifts the singer and the listener nearer the *Nādabṛhman.* Muthuswami Diksitar of the Trinity, in exercise of his erudite wisdom on the efficacy of music and his own inclinations advised his disciples to sing his delectable song on Devi Minaksi in the last minutes of his human existence as he was slipping into eternity.

Mahatma Gandhi entered eternity with his immortal call 'Rama' which was perhaps ever imprinted in his mind. His passion for *Ram Dhun* and favourite *Iṣta Dēvata,* Ram was proverbial. Such a call on the Divine in the last minute of life is feasible only to men with spiritual experience and conviction refreshed daily with *bhajans*. The eminent musicologist, journalist and patriot, Kalki Krishnamurti, on his deathbed, requested [now a Bharat Ratna] Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi to sing devotionals which brought tears to Kalki who asked his daughter Anandhi to continue. Unfortunately this divine remedy is not invoked by common folks in the midst of misery for lack of spiritual experience and conviction.

Eminent Yehudi Menuhin has said, 'Let there be less of speaking [shall we add the so-called oriental wailing?] and more of [subtle, muffled, soulful] music and periods of silence when the music has also to stop'. 'How very meaningful is that silence?, bemoans the Queen of Music, M.S. Subbulakshmi. Body and mind get integrated and steeped in hushed prayerful silence with *adwaitic* impact, involvement and dedicated fortitude. What a delightful silence is it?'

***

Bhartruhari's *Nītiśatakam* on Music

a. 'A dog in front of his feeder waves its tail and falls at his feet; but an elephant, while receiving his food, looks at it gravely and eats only after pleasing words of persuasion'. –*Slōka* 3.

When Karaikudi Vina Brothers arrived for a concert at the house of a prominent landlord, the reception was suspected to be rather cold. The Brothers plainly declined when the host requested for an encore of a particular phase of rendition and did not want to respond to the call for dinner. But once they acceded, the host was a picture of solicitude and affability and the Brothers were at a loss to assess and understand the man.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

b. 'Unasked the sun makes the lotus to blossom.
The moon unasked causes kumuda to bloom;
The cloud unasked pours rains.
Even so, noble men on their own toil for the welfare of humanity.'
–*Slōka* 74

Bhāgavatas, vāggēyakāras like Jayadeva, Purandara, Gopalakrisna Bharati, the Trinity and Subrahmania Bharati had shed lustre thinking little of and actually spurning all monetary considerations all their lives. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar refused to perform on learning of gate collections. Dr. M.S. Subbulaksmi, Dr. M.L. Vasantakumari, D.K. Pattammal and many others had helped great causes with their music. Violinist Rajamanickam Pillai sought for an elephant to donate to the temple in his native Kumbakonam. *Gurus* in India taught music and languages without tuition fee till recently. Actually Ekalavya had to beg of his guru to accept a *dakṣiṇa*! Basically this sense of *sarvē janā sukhinō bhavantu* or *ellōrum inburṛirukka vēndum* was the sum and substance, the goal, prayer and aspiration of eminent erudite men of Bharat as wisdom was community property to be shared by all. No wonder Tyagaraja invokes them all reverentially in his *Endarō Mahānubhāvulu* to pay his respects! Composers and musicians led admittedly dedicated lives as they believed in the devotional appeal of the art and since they knew not anything else.

a. 'When the kartra tree has no leaf, it is not the fault of spring
If the owl does not see in the day, it is not the fault of sun.
If showers do not fall in the mouth of cataka bird, the cloud is not to be blamed.
None can wipe out the writings of the Creator at birth on the forehead of each.'
–*Slōka* 93

Lal Bahadur Sastri immediately after resounding success died mysteriously. Indira Gandhi stepped in when least expected. When Satyamurti stepped out, Rajaji stepped in as the Premier of composite Madras. The Maid of Orleans took up the command of the French and won decisive success...There are numerous such historical cases.

Likewise Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar, G.N.Balasubramanian, Rajamanickam Pillai and many others entered the concert stage in *ad hoc* arrangements and never had occasion to look back and topped the honours. Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar started as a violinist but ended as a top vocal maestro. Kadiri Gopalnath started as a nagaswara artiste but has become a world-renowned saxophone artiste. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar switched over from *Vēdas* to vocal, to *harikathā* gaining lavish laurels. Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar and Pallavi Gopala Ayyar were found unfit and thrown out as apprentices, but later became stalwarts of eternal fame. Flute Mali was discarded by titans when he wanted to learn, but he outshone and drowned them all later.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Veena:

Few musical instruments have been invested with such grace and merit and drawn praise from the highest authorities in the most laudatory terms as Veena from the dawn of our civilization. Sage Yajñavalkya says that *nādōpāsana* with chaste veena play leads one along the sure path of salvation without *dhyāna. Saṅgita Upaniṣad Sarodhara* of Vacanacharya Sudhakalasa [1340 C.E.] while describing *swaras* and *rāgas* as divinities endows them with expertise in veena play. Veena was the symbol of chaste music, nobility, divinity and morality.

[One is apt to wonder whether the slowly diminishing popularity of veena could be attributed to the diminishing interest in spiritual pursuits and yearning for salvation in a material world! Perhaps people fear and apprehend that veena play *ipso facto* results in, and despatches the *vainika* to, salvation! Probably musically talented people see a positive threat of being crowned *muktah* depriving them of earthly pleasures! Drawing inspiration from the episode of King Trisanku, Dasi Aparanji, in the song *Kāna Vēṇḍum Kailayai* in the Gemini tamil film of that name, prays that she be blessed to see Kailas with her live body of flesh and beauty, health and wealth and enjoy it. If this is possible and is assured, the apprehended threat of salvation may recede and more may confidently take to veena!]

Saivite apostle Appar in delight saw divine presence in veena play. Not only Devi Saraswati but Devi Laksmi too is described as playing the veena. Poet Kalidasa says that Goddess Parasakti is a vainika who gets lost in the *sapta swaras* thereby becoming the Symbol of Tranquility and Gracious Heart. Samgadeva, the great musicologist, is all praise to it. Sri Ramakrisna Paramahamsa once expressed his yearning to hear veena play and a devotee obliged him immediately. Many temples such as those at Badami, Belur, Halebid, Pattiswaram, Madurai, Tiruvalanchuli and Tirupparankundram present sculptures indicating wide popularity of veena.

Veena has been the one instrument that has received the largest measure of the highest praise from the most learned in India. Hailed as Saraswati Veena in the South, it has been a symbol of beauty, elegant shape, eloquent in spiritual and aesthetic appeal and message. The presence of veena in a house symbolizes refined status, particularly for ladies in society. Rudra Veena, as it is popularly known in Northern India, has not undergone that much of change. Subramania Bharati chose only the Veena to highlight his case (*Nalladōr Veenai Śeidu...*) Royal Courts in the South vied with each other in installing as many vainikas as possible in their Courts. Of course, Mysore belt is still evincing comparatively greater interest in the instrument.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

'The prototype of South Indian veena is not the Raghunathamela vina but the Tulajendramela veena as described in *Saṅgita Sāramṛta* [c.1730 C.E.] In Thanjavur veena, the width of the fret is small which interferes with the play on the fourth string. I have done veenas with wider frets producing greater resonance while playing the *mandra sthāyi*', observes R. Satyanarayana in *Sruti* 164.

B.V.K. Sastry, musicologist, rightly observes that veena and *tana* rendition [i.e., non metrical, dispersed phrasing of catch words or any brief lyric successively in different tempos to bring out the angular essence and beauty of *rāga*] are made for each other. In fact, *tāna* [or *madhyamakāla* as it was formerly called], should have come into vogue only because of its enslaving beauty when it is performed on veena. Surely that musical effect is not evident when *tāna* is done with other instruments and it is much less in vocal rendition. Devakottai Narayana Ayyangar had said that with each *meetu* or plucking the veena string, four notes can normally be played and it may extend to six with practice. 'I had accompanied Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar in a concert but when Karaikudi Sambasiva Ayyar learnt of it, he remonstrated stating, 'How could you use a royal instrument to provide accompaniment!' The high pedestal on which artistes and litterateurs had all along placed veena was the main reason for the instrument enjoying elitist image all along. And Ravi Varma with his matchless painting made Saraswati and Veena symbolical of all that is exquisite. Veena had been used to provide accompaniment not infrequently till the all-conquering violin made its aggressive monopolistic advent.

The Pandyan Queen, **Mangayarkarasi**, who ruled over Madurai belt in the 15th Century, had issued coins with the inscription of Goddess Saraswati Devi playing her veena.

Narada has stated, 'I go about the three worlds and beyond playing this veena given me by the Lord tuned to the seven notes that bring the bliss of Brhma.'

–*Srimad Bhāgavatam* I-VI-32-37.

***

Flute: Sangita Kalanidhis Palladam Sanjiva Rao & Dr. N. Ramani:

'Veena, flute and mridangam are the triple ancient musical instruments of India. Poet Kalidasa has adverted to the origin of flute, which is called by different names like *vēnu, muraḷi, vamsi* and *tunavam.* There are many varieties of flute like kurunkuzhal and nedunkuzhal. Flute attained celestial importance when Lord Kṛiṣṇa played it. I hail from a

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

family of flautists. Grandfather Azhiyur Narayanaswami Ayyar was my *guru* and relative. I have been conducting experiments and have introduced in Carnatic music concerts the long flute of North India.

'Wizard Flute Mali was my next *guru*. His flute play will exude perfect *sruti suddham, laya* control and *manodharma*'

–Excerpts from the speech of Dr. N. Ramani
at the Music Academy, Chennai.

Palladam Sanjiva Rao, one of the renowned flute maestros of the last century, was born in a family with musical dedication. Brother Prananathacharya, a disciple of Shatkala Narasayya, became a violinist. Sanjiva Rao followed suit. During a visit of Sarabha Sastri, the divine flautist, Sanjiva was introduced to him for acceptance as a disciple. The violinist became a flautist and rose to the top. He carried not only the vidwat of his *guru*, the beauty, tone and charm of his rendition but also the flute he handled! He passed it on to Ramachandra Sastri, his disciple in turn. What happened to it is not known since Sastri is no more. Rao's flute play was methodical, unhurried, traditional, thoughtful and appealing.

❋❋❋

Chronology:

Chronology has been the weakest point in India and the age of stalwarts and eminent men are subjected to much conjectures in consequence. Thus the **age of Bharata**, the author of *Natya Sastra* is estimated differently by different eminent authorities:

Dr. Padma Subramaniam	c 4433	B.C.E.
Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi	4th Century	B.C.E.
Malladi Ramakrishna Sastry	3rd Century	B.C.E.
Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasada Sastry	2nd Century	B.C.E.
P.V.Kane and A.B.Keith	300	B.C.E.
PSR Appa Rao and Dr. Manmohan Ghosh	100-200	B.C.E. –[*Sruti* 163]

A reference is solicited to the account on the grand dame of tamils, Avvaiyar at pages 150-153 in the *Fragrant Garland* which shows how chronology has worked false with our convictions. Such instances are many.

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Sine Quo non to learn Indian music

'One must read, absorb, learn and know about India's religion, philosophies and spiritual atmosphere; or even may have to come to India to understand our music, let alone play it. All this is necessary since our music is very closely connected to the complete unfolding of India's history and development. Without intense study of our traditions and culture, the music would appear false and sympathetic.'

'Starting from the very beginning it requires at least twenty years of constant work and practice to reach maturity and a high standard of achievement in our classical music. A talented student may do this with five years of planned, organized and concentrated work.

–Pandit Ravi Shankar

The "parrot" type of student is but a xerox copy of plain tradition. But the "creative genii" absorb the traditions and enrich them retaining the basic purity and sanctity and adding appropriate ornamentation and fresh fragrant beauty.

These views have been held by eminent authorities but universities have graduate courses of three years, tuitions by post [correspondence] or telephone too now. He who treads the identical path of the preceptor always does not add fresh laurels to the art and science. He is just *status quo ante*. It is only that student who takes on the journey to excellence and is not averse to take the plunge that leaves the imprint of his name on the effulgent pages of the history of musical India.

Lakṣman Kṛiṣṇarao Pandit of the Gwalior Gharana says,

> 'In old days, if a musician makes a mistake, the audience would immediately react. Now it is different. The audience applauds more and that too if the tabla player has shown his prowess with a few quick *bols* or *tihais*!'

***

Back Seat: An interesting episode:

Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar had a disciple in Venkataraman who provided him with voice-support at concerts. This disciple had a nagging desire to play the prime role. 'How long am I to vegetate in the back seat', thought he perhaps rightly. When he whispered this lurking wish, the preceptor was only glad to provide him the opportunity and in his own presence to give the concert the needed status. Concert commenced,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Venkataraman developed cold feet and surrendered confessing, 'I am fit to take only the back seat behind my *guru*'.

At the centenary celebrations on August 27,1998 of nagaswara mestro, T. N. Rajarathinam Pillai, narrating this incident, in his inimitable fashion, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar humourously said:

> 'If the Chief Minister, Kalaigñar Karunanidhi had only continued to undergo music training, I would be, perhaps, taking a back seat now behind him!'

Quick-witted Chief Minister, who presided and who comes of a nagaswara family, promptly replied:

> 'Perhaps Dr Semmangudi may take the back seat in delivering speeches but in music, surely I would be sitting only far behind him!'

The Chief Minister instructed that vital occurrences and views relating to the art should be garnered with the help of the great musician before they are forgotten and lost.

❋❋❋

Flask and Carnatic music:

The word 'flask' in common parlance refers to the vacuum flask, which is a vital part of the equipment of a vocalist at concerts [filled with dark-brown, mildly stimulating drink made from the shrub *coffee arabica*, originally a native of Ethiopia and Arabia, duly roasted and ground and infused in boiling water] barring a few unfortunate artistes who cling on to energizing *tirtha* [water] bottles still!

Flasks made their appearance in a different fashion on the stage of the orthodox Music Academy during the festival season as a patron cum publicity affair. M/s Eagle Flasks presented a flask to each of the principal participants in the 80th Conference of the Academy. [This might have generated much jealousy among others and many might have even thought of opting for other makes!] At the 82nd Conference, the company made amends and presented flasks to all the participants [*rasikas* unfortunately excluded!]. Filter coffee in a new flask positively should enjoy more flavour and fragrance and the music made richer!

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Legend on Doles!

History has seen many a maestro, titan or wizard on doles and it was not strange either in the East or in the West. *A Garland* [1990] recorded that the legendary Veena Dhanammal [1868-1938] was kept above wants by composer-admirer, Dharmapuri Subbarayar, composer and ardent fan of the vainika, enabling her for long to pursue her musical mission unhindered by wants and extracted the following passage from *Musings of a Musician* of Vainika-musicologist and ardent admirer of Dhanammal, R. Rangaramunaja Ayyangar

> 'She looked quite emaciated and worn out with age. Her four daughters and their children kept away from her. Blind and destitute, she sought refuge with Ramaniah Chetti. Now and then she would send me to three of her patrons to collect doles – K..Srinivasan of the *Hindu,* S. Duraiswamy Ayyangar, Mylapore [an advocate] and T.T. Krishnamachari…'

During December 1996, Sangita Kalanidhi T. Viswanathan, a scion of the maestro and a prominent flautist, told me:

> 'Ayyangar's version is incorrect. Grandmother was not deserted by the family',

> [**Note:** There could perhaps be no reason for Ayyangar to record a wrong version as he was deeply interested in extolling the eminence of the family. And Viswanathan was young then. Anyhow it is recorded.]

***

Ventriloquism & Music:

Sobhillu Sapta Swara [*Jaganmohini*] of Tyagaraja addresses mind, '*Nābhi hṛt kaṇṭa rasana nāsādula layandu*' [to worship the seven *swaras* which are goddesses expressing themselves from navel, heart, neck and tongue]. In times past, it was the firm belief that sound emanated from the region of abdomen and hence came to be called ventriloquism from the latin words *venter* and *loqui* meaning belly and speak.

***

Thoughts: On Nation:

'The core of Indian writings, compositions and discussions in the allied fields of music,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Divided attention, a handicap:

When tamil savant, Minakshisundaram Pillai came to know of young Gopalakrisna Bharati learning music too while yet his ward learning tamil, he warned him, 'Either tamil or music – not both'. And Bharati had to suspend his tuitions in music which figuratively had to be sent on a holiday leaving him with tamil. [His revolutionary musical opera in tamil, *Nandanār* was the craze of musicians, dramatists, dancers and *kālakṣēpa* artistes for about a century and is so still!]

Likewise Nilamani was learning music while simultaneously writing tamil stories. Whenever there was a slip in his musical rendition, *guru* Rajamanickam Pillai of Kumbakonam would tease him, though with solicitude,

> 'Either write stories or learn music.
> Don't tax and confuse your mind with both.'

What Saint Tyagaraja conveyed in his song, '*Oka mātā, oka bhānamu, oka patni vṛutude*', is not without significance. It applies to many issues and is a Code of Conduct for all times. One at a time and crown yourself with success therein.

❋❋❋

Cut & Paste:

The heading is not about editing a script fed into computer. It is on spiritual event. It is a case of *yōgic* wonder, an unbelievable dramatic episode in the life of Paramahamsa Sri Sadasiva Bṛhmendral. A muslim ruler lopped off an arm of the Paramahamsa when his court was in session. The Paramahamsa devoid of all body consciousness walked on least disturbed by what had happened. The muslim was aghast and got terrified. He ran after the holy man, knelt before him and implored forgiveness. Only then, did the Paramahamsa became conscious of what had happened. He quietly took the severed arm from the ruler and attached it to his shoulder and it rejoined appropriately like a cylinder fitting into a socket!. The muslim, it is said, turned a fakir!

–C.S.Ramakrishnan based on Dr. Prema Nandakumar's *Sri Sadasiva Bṛhmendral*

❋❋❋

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Rāga Nirōṣṭa: Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar's Creation:

This *rāga* is the brain-child of Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar, a musician of vast parts and a multi-faceted personality. Devoid of *madhyama* and *panchama*, it enables singing without the lips touching each other. There is an episode behind this creative tune. Many such *rāgas* or *sāhitya*, based on reality or figments of imagination have some episode attached to each. Bhagavatar's patron Mysore ruler Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar was seriously sick. Invoking the grace of Sri Saradha Devi, the *iṣta dēvatha* of the ruler, he is reported to have silently composed the song *Rāja Rāja rādhike, Nada nidhi Sārade* praying,

> 'O Devi, who is worshipped by the king of kings!
> Only Your grace can save our dear Krishna Raja. Pray...'
> –Source: Dr. M. S. Nataraja, U.S.A.

Bhagavatar with his penchant for rare *rāgas* enriched music and enthralled music enthusiasts with his perfumed mastery of music and composition. The eminent musician-artist S.Rajam has said:

'He infused life into *rāgas* like *Mōhana Kalyāni* [*kṛitis Bhuvanēswariah* and *Siddhivināyakam*], *Gauda Malhar* and *Valaji* [*kriti Jalandara*] which were then practically in coma. In 1928, sorrow-stricken at the death of his only child, he undertook a pilgrimage to Benares to gather mental repose. This enabled him to get conversant with the whole range of hindustani tunes and there emerged *raga Hamsanandi* and the *kriti Nidu mahima.* His masterpiece was the technically manoeuvred *raga Nirosta* where the lips never meet and the *kriti, Rāja rāja Rādhike, nada nidhi Sārade* full of creative excellence. His compositions are rich in *gamakas*.'

***

Yardsticks for Applause: Appreciation!

Hand-clap is the normal practice to express approbation or appreciation. Different methods, of course, are in vogue such as –

a. The highly elitist method mostly practised by some society women is one in which both the palms face each other, go up and down in expressive elegance as if it glorifies the *laya* sentiments [*aṅgika abhinaya*] but, as in *nirōṣṭa rāga* in which lips do not contact each other, the palms most elegantly desist with grace and nicety from touching each other; and no

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

sound emanates too! Eyes are blest to see such cultured gestures but the ear gets little food! [*Kaṇṇukku uṇavu irukkumpōdu kādukku ēdukkaḍi*? – when eyes are feasted, why bother about ears?–, a musical whisper is heard.]

b. The explosive, continuous, loud and prolonged applause in which an isolated rasika seeks and attracts attention to the disgust of others, who had stopped much before and even the artiste had commenced the next phrase!

c. Both the hands go up simultaneously, as if a *bhakta* was entering the portals of the temple of Lord Govinda, in charming appreciation and clap far above the heads of his own and of others so that it attracts the camera and the eyes of all others!

d. The *rasika* goes into ecstasies, bodily sways this way or that and loudly pats the back or thigh of friends, kith or kin nearby to show his deep appreciation! Of course there are many more!

It is interesting to know how the Maharajahs of Mysore appreciated. B.V.K. Sastry pens:

> 'The Maharajah himself being a connoisseur, the musician was naturally eager to learn about his reaction. But nothing would be visible on his face. But there was another yardstick which many musicians were not aware of. The recital was normally of one hour duration. If the rajah sat for more than half an hour, it means that he was pleased. If it was for half an hour, it was passable; and if it was less than that, it meant failure of the recital. Sometimes he was so pleased as in the case of Musiri Subramania Ayyar and Chintlapalli Venkata Rao that he sat for nearly 100 minutes!'

❋❋❋

Varṣaya, varṣaya,varṣaya Efficacy of *rāga* for *material benefits*:

Muthuswami Dikṣitar invoked *rāga Amṛtavarṣini* to bring in rains to rain-starved Ettayapuram. In the life of Tansen similar incidents are mentioned. There is an incident in the life of Uthukadu Venkatasubba Ayyar [whose life is detailed in *A Garland* at pages 420-422 and *Yet Another Garland* at pages 33-37].

The durbar of the Raja of Thanjavur was discussing the efficacy of *rāga Varuṇapriya*, a *rāga* indicating potential to lure rains. '*Meghamalhara* in Rajastani Ragamala pictures is pictured with Kṛiṣṇa at the centre in a setting with heavily overcast skies, dark clouds

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

streaked by lightning. In *Sri Tatva Nidhi* of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore [1799-1868], rain god is portrayed as seated on a mountain with a huge rainbow as his halo, peacocks sporting and chataka birds waiting for rain drops, etc. '[B.V.K. Sastry] One version put forth was that the *rāga* should be invoked and sung sitting under an ilandai [jujube] tree and the other was that it should be sung sitting on the north-western corridor of a temple. A third version was also presented to sing sitting under a vanni tree [*prosopis spicigera*]. Finally it was left to the decision of the musical bard of Uthukadu. When he started singing in *rāga Mēgharanjani,* clouds began collecting and when he took on *Varuṇapriya,* copious rains descended.

Presumably there is a case for an intensive probe into **scientific use of *rāga*** for material benefits. Our ancients have done more than what is needed on the **spiritual side**. Now it is for the world to apply it on the vital **material plane** in view of the country crossing 1000 millions in population and the world 6000 millions!.

Presumably there is a case for an intensive probe into scientific uses of *rāgas* for material benefits on the lines of musical therapy. But the trend is to proceed in the opposite direction. Melody Queen Lata Mangeshkar says that the music of gods is now being distorted with poor lyric with poor meaning and poor tunes in films and that the language of gods has to return. 'I used to sing up to ten songs a day in the past; but now it is one or two a month and it is without soul!' Poorly tuned unmusical film songs are chanted everywhere and it should be a herculean task to bring back the music of gods!

***

Acoustics:

A veteran vocalist who is crowned with the prestigious title at Madras during 1999-2000 has given an interview on certain vital issues. Throughout the interview, recorded in a cassette, a dog was uninterruptedly barking at its vibrant vocal best. I wondered how the vidwan had tolerated it and thought not that he liked music less but perhaps he loved his pet dog too as much, if not more. I went to his residence and enquired. I was told that the barking came from the burly dogs of the neighbour and that the vidwan was not able to, and felt hesitant to, object. [This is a fact; name is withheld.]

> [As I write this, three burly dogs from my adjacent house continue to bark which, they started years back, of course, with short intervals of less than an hour on each occasion, rendering life miserable. But the owner's pulse beats run on even keel only with the barkings!]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

This is the environment in which the *manōdharmic* classical Carnatic music is expected to be practised and flourish! Indian music can grow only in rural atmosphere of peace free from physical, social, societal and environmental constraints.

***

Karṇāmṛta Sāgaram – A massive thesaurus in Tamil:

Karnamrta Sagaram [The Ocean of the Ambrosia of What is heard] is perhaps the first, massive, all-embracing, prodigious thesaurus on music in tamil similar to *Sangita Sampradāya Pradarśini*. The author, Rao Saheb M. Abraham Pandithar [August 2, 1859 – August 31,1919], has given it the sub title, *Karuṇānandar Porkaṭakam*. Indian music has been handed down from pre-historic times orally – *karna parampara* from *guru* to *siṣya*. *Gurus* of the old school did not favour the use of notation, written songs, etc. on the ground that they were not conducive to the blossoming of *manōdharmic* aspect in music, which the Indian music is. Memory power was their prime virtue and legated asset which enabled creative, melodic music blossoming to the finest level of perfection, sweetness and receptivity conferring *śāntam, sowkhyam* and *śivam*.

Karṇāmṛta Sāgaram is a treasure-house of information, knowledge on the *lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya* of Indian music, more particularly Carnatic music in the context of music as it obtained in Tamil Nadu since ancient times. This encyclopaedia of vast parts and dimensions throws much valuable information on all aspects of musical history, development, techniques and other issues in the context of tamil works like *Śilappatikāram, Kallādam, Daṇḍialankāram* and *Isaimarabhudaiyār*. Theory of *Tamil iśai*, techniques of composing *gīta, varṇa* and *kīrtans* [structures of musical compositions] with varying *ārōhana* and *avarōhaṇa* [ascending and descending scales] and such other issues have been explored *in extenso*. He has taken into account theoretical discourses in ancient Tamil works. *Vādi, anuvādi, samvādi* and *vivādi, graha bhēdam* and *jīvaswara* and the method of *sputam* are extensively dealt with. He has given expression to his view that the Tamils were the most ancient community, that Tamil was the most ancient language and that the Tamils had most knowledgeably classified language even in ancient times into *Eyal* [prose], *Iśai* [poetry and music] and *Nāṭaka* [dance or drama]. He says that tamils had recognized twenty-four semi and quarter tones as against twenty-two normally suggested. Issues relevant to history, theory, past and present formulations and *inter se* distinctions in *Tamil Iśai* and Carnatic music as it has come down have all been gone into from the view point of a researcher-musicologist. It is the work of decades. Details of musicians have been given. *Karṇāmṛta Sāgara Tirattu* published in 1907 contains ninety-five songs – *gītam, swarajati, varṇam*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

and songs with appropriate *swaras* presumably inspired by the contribution of Saint Purandaradasa.

Note: [Son of Muthuswami Nadar and Annammal and born at Sambavar Vadagarai in Tirunelveli district, Abraham Pandithar started life as a teacher and blossomed into a learned musicologist of vast parts, deep penetration and a passionate patron of art attaining national stature. A composer and scholar, he excelled in his researches into the intricacies of *āyurvēda* [science of medicine] also. He convened two All-India Conferences on Music at Thanjavur in 1912 and 1916, which were attended by an amazing galaxy of eminent persons.]

***

Discord in Concert out of regard for Swami Vivekananda!

The word 'concert' normally means agreement, union by mutual consent or musical entertainment, *kacchēri*. My boy accompanying me to a concert was presumably attracted more by the *inter se* conviviality or rather the absence of it among the performers on the dais than their music. Unable to restrain curiosity and contain himself, he burst out ultimately.

'The vocalist does not smile at or turn to the violinist; and the mridangist does not smile at or turn to the ghatam artiste! Are they at loggerheads, dad?'

'No son, they are all chums outside. But on the **concert** dais, they with religious faith desire to prove the truth of the speech of Swami Vivekananda made over a century back!'

'Quite interesting! What was it, dad?

'Swamiji had then said, "In India, **three men cannot act in concert together for five minutes.** Each one struggles for power and in the long run, the whole organization or institution comes to grief. O Lord, when will we learn **not** to be jealous?" Presumably the artists **construe the word 'concert' strictly** to mean the performance.'

***

Concert and Canteen:

Institutions, while arranging for concerts, lec-dems, workshops, etc on music, thoughtfully ensure canteen facilities too so that the proverbial dictum 'Food for belly shall be provided when there is none for the ear!' is not violated. Of course, with a majority

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

who come for entertainment or get-together in a holiday mood, the reverse holds good too. Yehudi Menuhin made it a condition that before his performance was commenced, the entry and exit doors should all be **closed** to avoid diversion and annoyance. The 26 year old sabha, Nadopasana, Chennai issued specific requests in writing to *rasikas* not to move out during the course of the concert. It had its effect and all the hearers did become *rasikas* duly graduated by their presence.

It was ITC Sangit Festival on **June 16, 1992** at Madurai, once the capital of the ancient cultured Pandyan kingdom, where Lord Sundareswara came out as a wood-cutter presenting delectable, divine music to scare away the eminent Emanathan who was to meet in a contest, a court musician, the Lord's devout *bhakta.* Maharajapuram Santhanam was at his usual best presenting his vocal music. The vocal maestro was unusually upset by the never-ending ingress and egress of people and showed his displeasure by ending the *ālāpana* of *Rītigaula rāga* the minute after he commenced and bade the violinist to do it! The audience noticed it not and the caravan of 'get-in' [*āyā Rāms*] and 'get-out' [*gayā Rāms*] continued. Ultimately the *rasika*-friendly mood of Santhanam took hold of him and asserted itself. The concert went on delightfully..

The maestro died eight days later in a car accident on June 24,1992. at the height of his glory, hours after a concert, to the profound dismay and distress of lakhs of lovers of his conjuring music.

❋❋❋

Eminence in Critiques & Reporting: An inside view:

'A high government official and erudite scholar-musician gave a scintillating lecture on the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru. With the notes I had made, Dr. V. Raghavan dictated a scholarly summary that was approved by the lecturer too. In office, when Assistant Editor N. Raghunatha Ayyar took it for a perusal, I handed it over [with understandable trepidation]. What he later sent to the Chief Reporter had undergone a complete transformation – practically a *de novo* editorial on Tyagaraja! The next morning Dr. Raghavan said, "This is not the copy I passed yesterday. Why should a reporter, [meaning me], tamper with it?" [K. Sundar Rajan reports so in *The Hindu* [December 1, 1998.]

When the Experts Committee met, Sundar Rajan reveals, he disappeared nervous of facing the two stalwart scholars – Dr. Raghavan and N. Raghunatha Ayyar together.. It is a tribute to the intellectual eminence of the two and the abundance of intellectual affluence

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of the period. *Anda nālum vandidādō!* [Will those times be witnessed again!] One may sing but does it come?

***

Liveliness in Experts' Committee in Music Academy:

Seven-stringed violin:

C. S. Ayyar's forthright views expressed in forcible language often created embarrassing situations. He was highly critical of the use of seven-stringed violins. The discussion took a heated turn and pioneer Mysore Chowdiah was equally vehement. Both became violent not only in language but also in gestures. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, a diplomat *par excellence* that he is, intervened and gave the quietus to the issue, saying, 'None of the concerts where Chowdiah [with his seven-stringed violins] accompanied me had failed.'

–[Source K. Sundar Rajan, former Reporter, *The Hindu.*]

Note: I have mentioned to the Academy that the Experts' Committee meetings need be made useful and lively since many of the presentation in recent years lack lustre.

***

Trinities:

Bharat has fancied the Trinity formation in many things. The Gods of Creation, Preservation and Destruction [Bṛhma, Viṣṇu and Śiva] have their counterparts in Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati which led to the beautiful film song and picture *Kalviyā, Śelvamā, Veeramā?* – wisdom, wealth or valour" – representing the three goddesses. The Carnatic Classical Trinity who constitute the backbone and soul of South Indian music are Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikṣitar and Syama Sastri. The lady performing trinity comprised Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi and the two Sangita Kalanidhis D.K.Pattammal and M.L. Vasantakumari. Percussionists wind up their *teermānams* repeating them thrice. The auctioneer offers three chances before the hammer strikes. There are many such cases. T.S. Parthasarathy selected a trinity of *manōdharmic* wizards that comprised Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, T.N. Rajarathinam and Flute Mali. Quite strangely S.Y. Krishnaswami had three close titans, viz., Tiger Varadachariar in lieu of Mali and the other two – Maharajapuram and Tiruvaduthurai maestros.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Practice during training and later:

The ***Garlands*** have highlighted accounts of the strenuous practice done regularly by mestroes to inspire like action by others at different stages of the ladder. Here are a few more.

'Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar had come to our house once. Krishna Ayyar went with his violin and slept in the Perumal temple nearby. He got up exactly at four in the morning and unmindful of the place or the environment started playing the violin, a practice common with most of the vidwans of those days. **I can say emphatically that the quiet and peaceful atmosphere was the essential factor that contributed to the purity of *nāda* which they invoked effortlessly.**'

–Lalgudi Jayaraman, Violin maestro.

"I used to get up at 4 a.m. My father **[Narayana Ayyar]** would wake me up. Practice would commence and go up to 7 a.m. for coffee-break. Then it would start again till I start for school. Again there will be practice from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. My father was a taskmaster. Today I am what I am because of him!'

–Prof. T.N. Krishnan, a Sangita Sagara.

Note: Top violinist V.V. Subramaniam too had his tutelage under Narayana Ayyar for two years.

For taking details of his musical life, I approached Narayana Ayyar when he was with his son, Prof T.N.Krishnan, who is genial not only in his violin play but personally too. Narayana Ayyar was pacing the room in *durita kāla* and out of respect Krishnan adjourned to the next room. Ayyar commenced but suddenly his mood changed and said, 'We shall have it some other day'. That day did not come since he expired soon after.

❋❋❋

Maestro Palghat Mani on top percussionist Vellore Ramabhadran:

The venue was Sri Krishna Gana Sabha. The occasion was the conferment of Sangita Chudamani Award. Palghat Mani Ayyar, the percussion wizard spoke on the occasion thus:

'Ramabhadran is a very intelligent accompanist. If you give him one rupee, he would spend only sixty-five paise and retain the balance. What I mean is that he

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

will not exhibit all that he knows. He will supply by way of rhythm only that much that is essential to make the concert great. He has *Bṛhmalayam,* that is whatever his mind conjures up, his fingers will translate on the instrument. He has such an intuition.'

Turning to Ramabhadran, he said, 'Keep this up throughout your career Under no circumstance, should you change your playing technique. *Lakṣya jñānam* is as important in mridangam as in vocal music.'

Ramabhadran is known to follow this advice and mode of presenting percussion accompaniment strictly in accordance with it. Once to a concert of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar at Sai Gana Sabha in Mylapore, Palghat Mani did not arrive. Ayyangar said:

"Fix up Nadabhadran.'

'Who is that Nadabhadran', all wondered.

'Don't you know Gopalachari'son Ramabhadran?"

Ramabhadran was brought in and concert commenced.

***

Ghatam maestro T.H. Vinayaka Ram: 'Pearl and Pearl-shine in Career:

'My father and I had gone to Tuticorin for a concert. Hawkers were selling oysters and many purchased them in the hope of finding a pearl therein as Turicorin is famous for pearl–diving. My father was reluctant to purchase one but relented when persuaded. I bought a handful for six annas [now worth roughly rupees ten]. We were agreeably surprised to see a *nalmuthu* [pearl] in the lot. Some offered rupees thousand for it. But many advised my father against it saying, 'This is a good omen for the future of your son. **He will shine like a pearl.** 'Father chose not to part with it.' [Vinayaka Ram is the top ghatam vidwan for over two decades with the blessings of the Kanchi Paramacharya, whose devout devotee he is. He says that Prof. T.N. Krishnan was responsible to take him to the top rungs of the profession. His family enjoys now a percussion monopoly.]

***

What is to follow the Golden Age of Maestros?

Undoubtedly the past century, and more particularly the earlier half, had seen a galaxy

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

of artistes in the South as well as the North. People talk with nostalgic superlatives of the excellence, grandeur and grace of music of the vanishing tribe of musicians. Some view that the present environment of glut will throw out many a titan, maestro and wizard, while others hold the opposite view and believe that they do not see the second level coming up to take the place that is being vacated. Some views herein:

'Music today is divorced from its old system of talim and old traditions. Our music is a product of traditions established and preserved by *gharanas*. The present renaissance will surely raise the standard of appreciation Nothing is being done to preserve the old styles of *Gāyaki* and *Baj* which are dying out... **I am convinced that once you turn music into a text-book, you destroy much of the genuine spirit.**'

–Aftab-e-Mousiqi Fayyaz Khan

'I am a bit concerned at the state of affairs in the sphere of Hindustani Classical vocal music. There are no giants or ustads in the second line of succession to fill in the void [at the top] once it occurs. There is a void in the second string of singers and vocalists. Of course, there are many great singers, ustads now but where is the second line to take over in due course? In the sphere of Classical Hindustani Instrumental music, there already exists a second generation of talented artistes to take over if need arises. There the situation is hopeful and promising. India is full of music and musical talent.'

–Pandit Ravi Shankar [*The Hindu*]

***

Classicism

Classicism is to art what *ēka patni vṛta* is to a married man [*gṛhasta*], avoiding the usual reference to and comparison with *pativṛata* [chaste lady] to stress the fact that there shall ever be a Sita positively wherever there is a Rama. Classicism that is *sampradāya*-oriented, conforms to the accepted *lakṣaṇas* and accepted *pāṭhāntara*. Classicism keeps in view merit and image, perfection and time-honoured usage, tradition, legacy and grammar which are vital for the enduring life of the art or art piece. One sees light music changing faces from decade to decade. And such ephemeral styles do not lend sustenance, strength and solidity to the art. They are at best 'hot foods' at wayside shops. Classicism enlightens and elevates while non-classical is more for pleasure and entertainment.

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

The Maestro's Lapse:

Palladam Sanjiva Rao who was the most prominent flautist after Sarabha Sastri's demise and before Mali annexed the place later. B.V.K. Sastri writes:

> 'One conspicuous fault in his music lay in the tempo or *laya*. It was pronounced in his elaboration of *neraval* or *swara*. The tempo would imperceptibly accelerate conspicuously, which lent a typically hindustani touch. His understanding admirers ignored this tendency of his music and enjoyed it all. While playing the song *Mātādabārodēno* (*Kamas*), he would be in virtual ecstasy.'

Musical Trusts
May they grow!

It is a laudable objective to perpetuate the name, fame and contribution of a maestro, wizard, or titan to inspire future generations. Normal tendency has been to think of such endeavours for persons in the political field alone with statues, whether the individual deserves it or not. [Such action is not infrequently initiated with motives other than pure respect.] It has been the custom to celebrate the birth or the *samādhi* day of venerable persons from time immemorial. In recent decades in the field of music, dance and other arts also this is being done by founding a trust in the name of the great musical or dance maestro and celebrating his birth day or some other occasion annually by providing performances, normally open to all *rasikas* to attend and enjoy. It is a mater for gratification that several such trusts have been formed in the last few decades such as those for Maharajapuram Santhanam, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar, Musiri Subramania Ayyar, T.N. Rajarathinam, Vazhuvurar, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, and many more. These trusts provide lecture-demonstrations, scholarships, etc. also. While in some, these trusts are promoted by family members, in others, it is done by students [*śiṣyas*]. Whatever be the individual mode of celebration or perpetuation of the name of the maestro, such enterprising action is laudable and is worthy of emulation.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Jaḍa [Interlaced strands or plaited Hair], a Symbol of Challenge? "NO"

Kuchipudi dance has a cult, a legend and an individuality as the best of fiction could ever be. It has caught the imagination of the art-crazy people and is now widely practised. The life of Siddhendra Yogi, its originator, is fully detailed in *A Garland*. There is a spiritual orientation, which is the very soul of the Kuchipudi dance. Unlike many other episodes where Radha or Rukmini takes the dominant role with the Lord of Brindaban, it is Satyabhama who is the prime *nāyika* in Kuchipudi. This is attributed to a legend that in his vision of Sri Krishna, Siddhendra Yogi beheld Satyabhama in the company of the Lord and it inspired the Yogi to compose *Bhāmakalāpa*, which is the original source and sheet anchor of the dance. The dance has been the exclusive domain of males from inception with a departure recently. Vedantam Satyanarayana and some others have excelled and been able to project roles with far more feminine grace than the celestial Urvasi, Menaka or Tilottama or any lady dancer on this planet has been able to. That has been the standard of involved training, soulful dedication and inspired presentation B.V.K. Sastry brings to notice a convention which is at once a ritual and a challenge.

[A screen is held in front of the principal actor or actress on his or her first entry. It has been in vogue from the days of *Natya Sastra*. It helps introduction, clarification and elaboration of story for the benefit of audience]. As Satyabhama enters the stage behind such a curtain, her ornamented *jaḍa* [plaited hair] is thrown over the curtain. If anyone wants to challenge Satyabhama in respect of the excellence of her dance, etc., he is at liberty to ascend the stage and hold the *jaḍa* as it happens in *Panchali Sabatham*. If the challenger is adjudged the winner, he is at liberty to cut off the *jaḍa* and carry it as prized mementos.

'Well was there ever any challenge and surrender of *jaḍa*', asked Sastry.

'Yes, once. It was related to me by elders. A visiting party repeated the act of tossing the *jaḍa* over the socreen. Vempatti Venkatanaraya ascended the stage and held the *jaḍa*. Before there could be the contest and the clash, it came to be known that the party too originally belonged to Kuchipudi. The challenge was dropped amicably, replied Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma.

I really believe that the *jaḍa* 'ossing is more of an embellished, artistic, cultured, symbolic announcement of the entry of the heroine rather than a challenge since there could never be any challenge before the enactment. It is analogous to the entry song a king entering the stage usually sings in dramas of old, like '*Nānē Maharājan vandenI*' [I, the king, am entering] S.G. Kittappa used to take to an entry song which would emotionally electrify and surcharge the auditorium. The sudden appearance of the plaited hair on the screen was to make the audience sit erect as if to say, 'Yes, there she is at long last!'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IVA

Kamākṣi – Bairavi

Lotus eyed Goddess, Neck resembling the white shell conch, the glowing hair resembling dark clowds, breasts like round vessels, holding lotus in her hand...

–Syamasastri

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Glossary

Abhinaya: It is the intellectually vibrant, expressive soul of bharatanatya. *Sāhitya* and *saṅgita* provide the meaning and message, content and scope, flesh and bone, the inlaid *bhāva* to be delineated and the *rasa* that should flow out. The music [*rāga, tāla, kāla* and *sthāyi*] charts out the mode and the staple food for action. The artiste portrays, translates and delineates the sum and content of songs, thoughts and actions, emotions and message embedded therein through expressive, intelligible symbolic signs, gestures and movements in accordance with prescribed and accepted methods. They comprise *āhārya* [costumes, etc], *aṅgika* [body and facial expressions and changes], *vācika* [*bhāva-rasa* soaked lyric, pickled with *jatis*] and *sātvika* [overt reaction to emotions and thrills of heart and soul]. The excellence, beauty and artistic presentation of *abhinaya* determine the grade of the artiste and of the performance. This was very dominant in dance concerts just a decade or two earlier but slowly faces *avarōhana* in the context of switching over to ballet, etc. Greater the number of artistes on the stage, *abhinaya* is less out of sheer necessity *yielding* primacy to *nṛtta*. [One sees rudiments of *abhinaya* in the child when it rattles up the house seeking sweetmeats or in the blushing of a girl. It is inborn fundamentally to flower up with training and practice.]

Aḍavu This is the vital performing, communicative content of bharatanāṭya comprising movements of body, hands, foot, etc., providing integrated artistic grace and variations which enthuse, enthral and invigorate the audience. *Aḍavu* is present in *nṛtta, nṛtya* and *abhinaya.* It enables the *rasika* to understand the content and message of the lyric in depth. When the child jumps and flirts seeking a doll, there are rudiments of scientific *aḍavu* and *abhinaya.*

Ālāpana Extempore, creative, intuitive innovation, *manōdharmic* improvisation and delineation of a *rāga* or *tāṇa* by musician to bring out the potential excellence, beauty and structure of a *rāga.* It is the art of bringing out the *rāga swarūpa.* In classical music, it precedes the singing of the song proper [*kṛiti*, etc.].

Ārōhana/Avarōhana: Respectively they refer to the ascending and descending orders of notes for each individual *rāga.* The five notes [other than *sa* and *pa*] have two or three shades each. The differing combination of specific shades in each of the ascending and descending notes but with all [*sampūrṇa*] notes constitute a *rāga* in the family of the seventy-two *mēḷa, karta* or *janaka rāgas.* Lesser number of the notes involving omission of one or two [*varja*] or shuffled [*vakra*] either in the ascending or the descending or in both provide the *rāga swarūpa* of each *janya* [subsidiary] *rāga.* The number of such

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

derivative *rāgas* may increase day by day due to permutation and combination while it is a fact that unless a *rāga* enjoys beauty and conveys pleasure to the *rasika*, it remains only on paper. *Ranjayati iti rāga.*

Bhāva and rasa: *Bhāva* is the outward expression, communication, portrayal, elucidation, delineation of the emotion, feeling, message and content of a song by musician or dancer and *rasa* is the absorption and assimilation of those feelings of joy, sorrow, *bhakti,* etc. by the audience. If the song is the reservoir of emotions, the opening of sluice gates to let out the impounded water is the *bhāva* portrayal and the spreading out of water or irrigation of fields is the assimilation of *rasa.* The sluice gates are the artistes and fields represent the audience. These are dealt with *in extenso* earlier in Part I.

Kavuttuvam: 'This is a dance which originated in temple rituals in praise of individual deities. With the promulgation of the Devadasi Abolition Act, 1947, these have come to a standstill. T. Balasaraswati preferred not to present *kavuttuvam* on the stage in view of its origin and connection with temple rituals. *Pushpānjali* takes its place in performances.'[Ludwig Pesch] In the place of *sabdam,* sometimes, a *kavuttuvam* is invoked.

***Laya*:** Rhythm. This is dealt with Part III earlier. *Laya suddham* has an important bearing on the success and pleasing effect of the rendition.

***Naṭṭuvāṅgam*:** This is science and art of conducting a bharatanatyam recital in accordance with tradition, legacy and style [*bāni*] with cymbals, wherein the music and percussion as well as the orchestra provided by others synchronize and blend with the action [*abhinaya* or *aḍavu*] of the dancer as if they all constitute a single, integrated and composite *advaitic* whole. *Jatis* and other essential, coordinated, integrated aspects are done by the master called *naṭṭuvanār.* Tamil Nadu had presented a galaxy of *naṭṭuvanārs.* Eminent dancers attend to *naṭṭuvāṅgam* too now and then to lend grace and glamour.

[This last mentioned exercise can be compared to a practice that prevailed decades back in agriculture, where rich landholders used to enter the field and do some little work side by side with the labourers as if to indicate "I too know; I too can do it. Beware of shoddy work."]

***Nṛtya*:** This is the soul and the significant, vibrant and communicative part of bharatanatya. It is practical, overt, expressive, rhythmic delineation where the content of the song, its *bhāva* and meaning are all artistically and expressively brought out by the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

dancer. Bharata, the great author of *Nāṭya Śāstra* outlines the mode and method of action thus:

Yatō hastas tatō dṛṣṭi
Yatô dṛṣṭis tatō manas
Yatō manas tatō bhāvah
Yatô bhāvas tatō rasah.

The entire *slōka* applies to *nṛtya* and all but *bhāva and rasa* [unless it be to a highly restricted sense] apply to *nṛtta.* To apply the entire *slōka* to *nṛtta* would be rather strained. *Nṛtya* conveys the story, dialogue, theme, message, emotions and everything that the story, drama or song contains or is intended to convey through visual expressions, body movements, gestures, dress and all. *Ekarta nṛtya* is specific theme-based. *Bṛtakarta nṛtya* is based on multi themes, where the dancer presents several songs though she may appear with the same dress [*ēkaharya*]. *Tāndavam* is dance presented by males and *lasya* by females – normally seen in Siva Sakti dances. Whatever be the terminology, beauty and grace, expression and understanding and *bhāva* and *rasa* are *sine quo non* in *nṛitya.* Greater the communicative or expressive skill, beauty, charm, appeal, expertise and elegance in presentation, greater is the accreditation of the dancer.

***Nṛtta*:** Pure dance to bring out the beauty, elegance, felicity and grace of organized, planned, designed, well chiselled and integrated corporal movements [of human body and limbs] to the accompaniment of quasi-absolute music, i.e., with negligible lyric *sans sāhitya bhāva* primarily in middle and fast tempos but with significant emphasis on *laya.* The musical content is directed solely to enable, aid and promote maximum integrated presentation in which *bhāva-rasa* is virtually excluded or kept minimal. *Tāla* is dominant and keeps absolute parity with every step, jump, turn, shift, glide and curve of the body in such total identity that one will be at a loss to know whether the dancer follows the *tāla* or the reverse is the fact. It is a tribute both to the percussionist and the dancer. *Nṛtta* is the exuberance of spirit, the emotional outburst of the delight of the soul, visual portrayal, demonstration and delineation of controlled but delirious joy. It conforms to the needs and demands of regulated, scientific, enjoyable movements satisfying the norms of art and *laya. Aṅgika* is not only dominant but rules and reigns. *Āharya* is minimal, glittering just to please but of little relevance otherwise. *Vācika* is restricted to *jatis* and a little *sāhitya* just to give the exercise solidity. *Nṛtta* whips up interest and fancy, tempo and attraction. It confers satisfaction to the audience and rouses up dormant spirits in the auditorium. *Nāṭya* comprises *nṛtta* but the reverse is not true.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Opera: 'Opera is musical drama or drama set to music. It is applied music. An opera provides both musical and dramatic entertainment. In German, there are words *schausplel* and *oper* corresponding to English words drama and opera. Opera is superior to *yakṣagāna* both in music and in lyric. The writer of opera should be a special genius as a playwright, with insight into human nature, effective characterisation, dramatic instinct, capability to introduce fictitious characters or incidents, poetic skill, plenty of imagination, knowledge of ancient lore, knowledge of diverse musical forms, etc. Above all, he should have **the mind's eye and the mind's ear!** Opera comes later than drama in all countries. In India sanskrit operas are older than others. The nucleus is seen in the *Gita Govinda* [12th century C.E.] and the best opera in sanskrit is *Krishna Līla Taraṅgini* of Narayana Tirtha [16th century C.E.] Tyagaraja is the greatest among telugu opera writers.'

– [Prof. P Sambamurti]

***Rāga/Nāda*:** *Vide* discussion in Part IIA against Sri Tyagaraja herein and also the definition and details in the glossary in *Yet Another Garland.*

***Vāggēyakāra*:** One who composes the song and sings it. This is extensively clarified in *A Garland* – pages 505-506. Some compose the song but may not tune it and sing it. He is a composer and not a *vāggēyakāra.*

Note: The glossary in the earlier volume, the *Fragrant Garland* may be perused.

Sarōja Dalanētri – Sankarābharanam

Holding a parrot in her hand, and bees circling your luxurious growth of hair, and also dwelling in the *Sāmagāna* recitations...

–Syamasastri

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IVB

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Bibliography

Annadurai, Dr. M – *Pavendar Bharatidasan* – Poonkodi Publications, Bharati Nagar, Moolapalayam, Erode 12. [1991]

Bharata Kalanjali [V.P.Dhananjayan and Shanta Dhananjayan] – *Kala Sadhana* – Chennai 600020. [1994]

Bharatidasan Kavitaigal – Publisher: T.S. Kunchitam, Cuddalore. [1938]

Bharatidasan Kavitaigal – Publishers: Sendamizh Nilayam, Pudukottai. [1986]

Śṛiṅgārika - Centre for Indian Classical Dances, C-304, Defence Colony, New Delhi110024. [1983]

Chinnappa, B.N. – *'Nāṭaka Ratna Gubbi Veernna'* – Bangalore University, Bangalore. [1982]

Dhananjayan, V.P – *'A Dancer on Dance'* – Bharata Kalanjali, Adyar, Chennai 600020. [1991]

Dhananjayan, V.P.- *'Kalā Sādhana'* – Bharata Kalanjali, Chennai 600020. [1994]

Ekambaram, T.- *'Nūṛeṭṭu Tāla Tiruppugaḷ'* –Author, Irai Pani Mandram, Tambaram, Chennai 600059. [1993]

Harindra Srivatsava - '*Five Stormy Years – Savarkar in London'* - Allied Publishers Private Ltd., Chennai. [1983]

'The Hindu', 'The Indian Express', etc. dailies.

Jagadisan, T.N. - '*Leaves from Indian Culture*' -Blakie & Son India Ltd., Chennai.

'Kannadasan Kavitaigal': Vanathi Padippagam, Chennai 600005. [1978]

Ludwig Pesch & T.R.Sundaresan – *'Eloquent Percussion'* – Eka Grata Publications. [1996]

Ludwig Pesch – *'The Illustrated Companion to South Indian Classical Music'* – Oxford University Press. [1999]

Kamala Tyagarajan PTR. - *'Iṣai Tamiḻin Unmai Varalāru*' - Publisher: Author, Palaiyam Illam, Madurai 625002. [1997]

Kannappan, Rama – Kannadasan Pathippagam, Kannadasan Salai, Chennai 17. [1994]

Maharajan, S. – Letters of Rasikhamani [T.K.Chidambaranatha Mudaliar] – T.K.C. Vattathotti, Chennai 600020. [1979]

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Marg Publications [Extracts ; Courtesy T.S. Parthasarathy].

Music Academy, Madras: Journals: Music Academy , Chennai 600014.

Padma Subramaniam, Dr.- *'Bharatakalai Kōtpādu'* – Vanati Padippakam, Chennai - 600017 [1996]

Parthasarathy, T.S. – *'Sri Tyāgarājaswāmi Kīrtanaigal'* – The Karnatik Music Book Centre, Chennai 600014 [1991]

Premalatha, Dr. - '*Music through the Ages'* - Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi [1985]

Rajagopalachari [Rajaji] [Chitragupta] '*Life of Barrister Savarkar*' – Delhi Hindu Mission Press [1919]

Rajagopalan, N. – *"A Garland", "Another Garland", "Yet Another Garland"* and *"The Fragrant Garland"* – 'Carnatic Classicals', 3/1, 24th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Chennai 600020 [1990 to 1996]

Ravi Shankar - '*My Music, My Life*' - Vikas Publications, Delhi [1968]

Sastry, B.V.K – *'Murali Vani'* – Sri B.V.K. Sastry Felicitation Committee, Bangalore Gayana Samaja, K.R.Road, Bangalore 560004. [1999]

'Shanmukha', a Magazine on Classical Music- Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangita Sabha, Mumbai 400022.

Sri Krishna Gana Sabha – *'Thoughts and Actions'* – Editor: V.P. Dhananjayuan – SKG Sabha, Chennai, 600017. [1995]

'Sruti', A magazine for Music and Dance, Alapana, J.J. Rd., Chennai 14.

Sudharani Raghupathy. Dr. – 50 years of Dance – Shree Bharatalaya, Chennai 600004. [1997]

Sunda [M R M Sundaram]- '*Kalki'* - Vanathi Pathippagam. Chennai 17. [1993]

Sundar Raj, Dr. M. [Tamil Nadu Archives] – The Devadasi Memorial [1927]

Sundaram Ayyar, A. – Sri Muthuswami Dikṣitar Kirtanaigal – Music Books Publishers, Chennai 600004 [1989]

Swaminatha Ayyar, Dr. U.Ve. – *'Śilappadikāram'* – Tamil Palkalai Kazhagam, Thanjavur [1985]

The Hindu – *'The Hindu Speaks on Music'* – Kasturi & Sons, Chennai - 2 [1999]

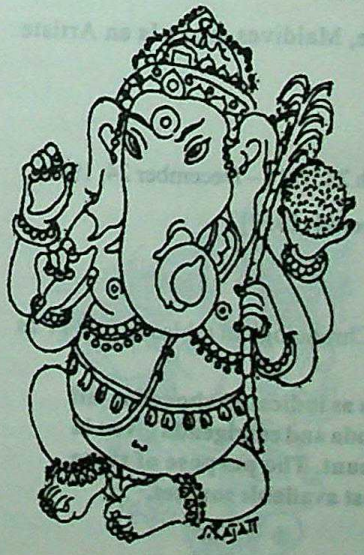
Venkataraman, M, Editor *'Sankarābharanam'* [Magazine] 305, Mowbray's Road, Chennai 600017. [March issue] [1985]

***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IVC



BĀLA GAṆAPATI: Vermillion complexion like that of the enchanting rising sun. Four shapely hands with fruits and sugarcane while the trunk holds a *mōdaka*. Innocent and beautiful, childish craving for fruits and sweets Ganapati is a unique conception of Hinduism. The most well-known of Gods and universally worshipped. The temple of *Sri Jalakandēswara*, Vellore has a Baby *Gaṇapati* crawling on all fours. Remover of struggles, *Gaṇapati* is a Repositor of wisdom.

–Dikṣitar

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Addenda & Corrigenda

Book I

Annaswami Bhagavatar Page 13: line 13: Correct the dates as [July 3, 1899 – August 16, 1967]

Banni Bai Page 26 Line 8 from bottom: For [b. 1912] Read [1912 – February 27, 1999]

Dr.B. Devendrappa: Page 49 Line 27: Correct dates as [June 3, 1899 – June 9, 1986]

Kodandarama Ayyar, Umayalpuram: Page112 Line 1: Correct dates as [October 27, 1889 – June 1, 1966]

Neelamma Kadambi: P.195 Line16: For [b. July 7, 1911 Read [July 7, 1911 – December 14, 1998]

Ramanathan, Dr. S. P.238 Line 17: For March 19, 1985 read March 19, 1988

Musiri Subramania Ayyar, P.332 year of birth For 1889 read 1899

Book II

T.N.Krishnan P 172 Line 1 For [b. October 16, 1928] Read [b. October 6, 1928]

Thanjavur Ramadas Rao Page 242 Line 8: Correct as [April 2, 1889 – May 31, 1961]

Book III

Jayanti Ravikiran: P.137: Line 2: Correct the line as Jayanti Ravi Kiran – Veena Artiste: [b. 1970] & correct the year against her name as 1970 in Part IV.

Calcutta K.S. Krishnamurti: Page 146 Line 2: Correct date as [December 21, 1923 – May 16, 1999]

Prof. T.A. Thanapandian: Page 271: Delete letter 'G' in the name on line 2 & correct date thus: [October 24, 1921 – November 10, 1999]

Neyveli B. Venkatesh. P.290 Line 1: Correct year of birth 1965 as 1963.

Add: Concert tours to South Africa, U.K., Europe, Singapore, Maldives, etc. : Is an Artiste in the Cultural Department of Neyveli Lignite Corporation.

Book IV

C.S.Krishna Ayyar; Page 174: For [b. March 23, 1916] Read [March 23, 1916 – December 24, 1998]

A. Kanyakumari: Page 294 Line 19: Correct the date as [b. December 31, 1952]

General

Books I, II, III: Correct the years against Ramnad Krishnan in Chronological tables in Part IV as [1918 – 1973]

Note: Correct the chronological tables in all the books as indicated above for all cases. The above corrections are in addition to the addenda and corrigenda given in the earlier volumes which may all be taken into account. The purpose of these corrections is to ensure accuracy on the basis of the best available sources.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

PART – IVD

Sankari – Sāveri

Having on one hand the begging bowl (*Kapālam*) and the other, the trident spear, with the thin hips, and most beautiful in your young appearance...

–Syamasastri

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Index

	Page No.
Abraham Pandithar, M.	410
Alathur Brothers – Legendary Duo maestros	138
Allauddin Khan, Malhar Ustad	343
Ambhikapati, son of poet Kambar	88
Amjad Ali Khan, Ustad	295
Ananthalakshmi Venkitaraman	139
Andal [Goda Devi]	126
Anjali – [Dr. Anne Marie Gaston] – Research-oriented dancer	302
Annamacharya, Tallapaka	128
Arunagirinathar, Saint [*Tiruppugaḷ*]	152
Aruna Ranganathan	140
Babu Rao, T.S.	140
Bade Mohamed Khan & Haddu – An Incident	347
Baghyalakshmi, B.	147
Balakrishnan, Chalakudi N.S.	141
Balambal, S.	141
Balamurali Krishna, Mangalampalli Dr. [*Manōdharmic* demonstration]	29, 142
Balasaraswati, Dr. T. [*Abhinaya* maestro]	303, 366
Bawa Diksit	342
Beethoven, Ludwig Van	288
Bernard Shaw	375
Bhadrachala Ramadasa	127, 143
Bharata Muni, [*Nāṭya Śāstra*]	83
Bharati, Dr. P	360
Bharatidasan, Puratchi Kavignar	147
Bhartṛhari – *Nīti Śatakam*	374, 396
Chamarajah Wodeyar I, Maharajah	150
Chellappa. K.B.	151
Chitra Visweswaran [Dance]	305
Chowdiah, Mysore T. [Violin wizard]	343, 349
Dakshinamurti Pillai, Pudukottai	151
Dhanammal, Veena	403
Dhananjayan, V.P. and Shanta Dhananjayan [Dance Duo]	308
Ekambaram, T. – *Tiruppugaḷ Layamani*	152
Gangubai Hangal	297
Gayatri Shankar	153
Gopalakrishna Bharati [*Nandanār*]	154
Gopalakrishnan, K.V & K.V.R.S.Mani	187
Gopalakrishnan, Parur M.S.	157
Gubbi Veeranna [Dramatist]	59, 159
Gururajan, Erode A.	160
Haddu [Victim of *guru*'s jealousy]	347

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Harihara Ayyar, Vainika P. 259
Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Pandit 297,362
Indira Bai Thankachi [Dance] 313
Irayiamman Tampi, Composer 161
Isai Gnaniar, Apostle 161
Ishwar Candra Vidyasagar [Patriot] 349
Jasraj, Pandit 296
Jayadeva 127
Jayan Bharatakshetra [Dance] 314
Jayaraman, Lalgudi [Violin Maestro] 99,386
Jayaraman, Sendangudi 162
Jawaharlal Nehru, Pandit [India's first Prime Minister] 348
John Keats [Poet] 369
Joseph Shury [Flute play record] 352
Kalanidhi Narayanan [Dance] 315
Kamala [Dance] 317
Kamala Tyagarajan P.T.R. [*Yaḷmuri paṇ* research] 358,380
Karunanidhi, Chief Minister Kalaigñar 378,402
Kesava Bhagavatar, Madurai K.V. 166
Kannadasan, Kavigñar 163
Karthiga Kanesar [Dance] 318
Keshavamurti, R.R. 183
Kittappa S.G. and Vishnu Digambar [*Rāga Taraṅgiṇī*] 166,362
Krishna Ayyar, E. [Trend-setter in bharatanatya] 319
Krishna Ayyar, Tirukkodikkaval 213,214,360
Krishnamurti, Nellai T.V. 168
Krishnamurti, Palghat C.S. 169
Krishnamurti, R. [*Kalki*] 169
Krishnamurti, Vasa 174
Krishnan, N. S. [Cini star takes to ass rides] 356
Krishnan, Pallavur S. 174
Krishnan, Prof. T.N. 414,415
Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, Mysore Mummadi 175
Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, Mysore Nalvadi. 176
Kṣētrajña 89
Kumar, B.R., All India Radio 393
Kumara Kerala Varma, P.R. 178
Lakshminarayanan Ayyar, S. 179
Lakshminarayana Ayyar, Prof. V. 179
Lakshmi Podhuval, Dr. 180
Lakshmi Viswanathan [Dance] 321
Lalgudy Jayaraman [Violin maestro] 414
Lavani Venkata Rao, Thanjavur 363
Madhavi Rajagopalan 181
Mahadeva Sarma, S.R. & Rajasree R. 182
Mahalingam T.R. [Mali] and R.R. Keshavamurti 183

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Malladi Musicians – Malladi Brothers 184
Mallika, Dr. S. 185
Mani, Karaikudi R. [Sruti Laya Seva] 186
Mani, Krishnapuram K.V.R.S. 187
Mani Ayyar, Palghat, Sangita Kalanidhi 188, 414
Mani Ayyar, T.P. 188
Manickavachakar, Saint 127
Meera Nathan 189
Mirabai 126
Murthy, Dr. T.K. [Privilege / Decorum] 353
Muthiah Bhagavatar, Harikesanallur 190, 401, 407
Muthuswamy Dikşitar – of the Classical Carnatic Trinity 36, 190, 396, 408
Mydhili, V [Dance] 322
Nagaraja, R. 193
Narayana Tirtha, Swamy 383
Omanakutty [Amma], Dr. K. 194
Padmanabha Ayyar, M. 195
Padmanabha Sarma, P. 196
Padma Rajagopalan 197
Padma Subramanyam, Dr. [Dance] 323
Parthasarathy, T.S. 12, 30, 145
Pattammal, Padma Vibhushana D.K. 350
Pattammal Ganapathy [Nagpur] 198
Periyalvar 127
Pithukuli Murugadas, *Bhāgavata* 201
Ponnammal, Parassala B. 198
Prabhakara Varma, Mavelikara R. 202
Prapancham Sitaram, Dr. 202
Prema Doraiswamy 203
Purandaradasa, Saṅgita Pitāmahā 204, 350, 388
Radhakrishnan, M.G. 205
Radha Ramji 206
Raghava Warrier, K. 206
Rajachar, K. 207
Rajagopala Ayyar, Shenkottah S. 207
Rajalakshmi Tirunarayanan 208
Rajam, S. 132, 190, 209, 245
Rajamanikkam Pillai, Kumbakonam – *Dharmapatni* style 209, 406
Rajappa Ayyar, Kumbakonam 211
Rajaratnam Pillai, T.N.R. – *Bhāva Saṅgita* Nagaswara maestro 213, 352
Raja Rao, Vainika L. 212
Rajeswari Menon 216
Ramani, Dr. N. 399
Ramaratnam, Madurai 351
Ramaswamy Ayyangar, A.V. 217
Ramaswamy, Cochin N.P. 218

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Ramesh, B.N. 219
Ranjani Gopal Menon [Dance] 326
Ratnakaran Bhagavatar, Kadakavur 219
Ravi Shankar, Pandit [*Bhārat Ratna*] 282, 348, 401, 416
Revati Krishna [Tillaisthanam family] 220
Rugmani Gopalakrishnan, S. 222
Sadasiva Brhmendral, Sri [Saint] 406
Saigal, K.L. 344
Sakharama Rao, Gottuvadyam Tiruvidaimarudur 344
Sanjiva Rao, Palladam [Flautist] 399, 417
Sarabha Sastri [Eminent flautist without physical vision] 223
Sastry, Bangalore B.V.K. 106, 399, 408, 417
Sastri Sisters [Vasanti, Uma, Bhagyalakshmi] [Dance] 327
Satya Sai Baba, H.H. 343, 358
Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar 376, 377
Sesha Ayyangar, Margadarśi 224
Seshagiri Rao, H.K. [Harmonist] 225
Seshanna, Mysore Veena maestro 226
Shankara Narayana Rao, C.K. 57, 226
Shankaranarayanan, V. 228
Shanta Dhananjayan 308
Shashikiran, K.N. 229
Sitalakshmi, G. 230
Sivaramakrishna Ayyar, K. 230
Sivaraman, Umayalpuram – Mridangam maestro 231
Sivaramiah, Veena 353
Sobha Antarjanam [Dance] 328
Somanatha – *Rāgavibhoda* Author 232
Somasundaram Pillai, Kanjira 352
Someswara Rao, Ayyagiri 232
Soundaryavalli, K.M. 233
Sowmya 234
Sreekumar, K.S. 235
Srinivasa Ayyar, Semmmangudi Dr. 346, 402
Srinivasamurti, R.K. 353
Srinivasan, Madurai T. 235
Sripada Pinakapani, Dr. – Strange life of a medico 199
Srivardini, K. 236
Srivatsa, Dr. V.V. – *Guruguhānjali* 191, 389
Subba Ayyar, Alathur 139
Subbiah Bhagavatar, S.V. 236
Subbayya Naidu, Mysore V. 361
Subbulakshmi, Dr. M.S., the ***Bhārata Ratna*** – *Sāmudri* 237
Subbulakshmi Muthuswamy 240
Subbulakshmi, R. 241
Subramania Ayyar, Sangita Kalanidhi Musiri 142

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

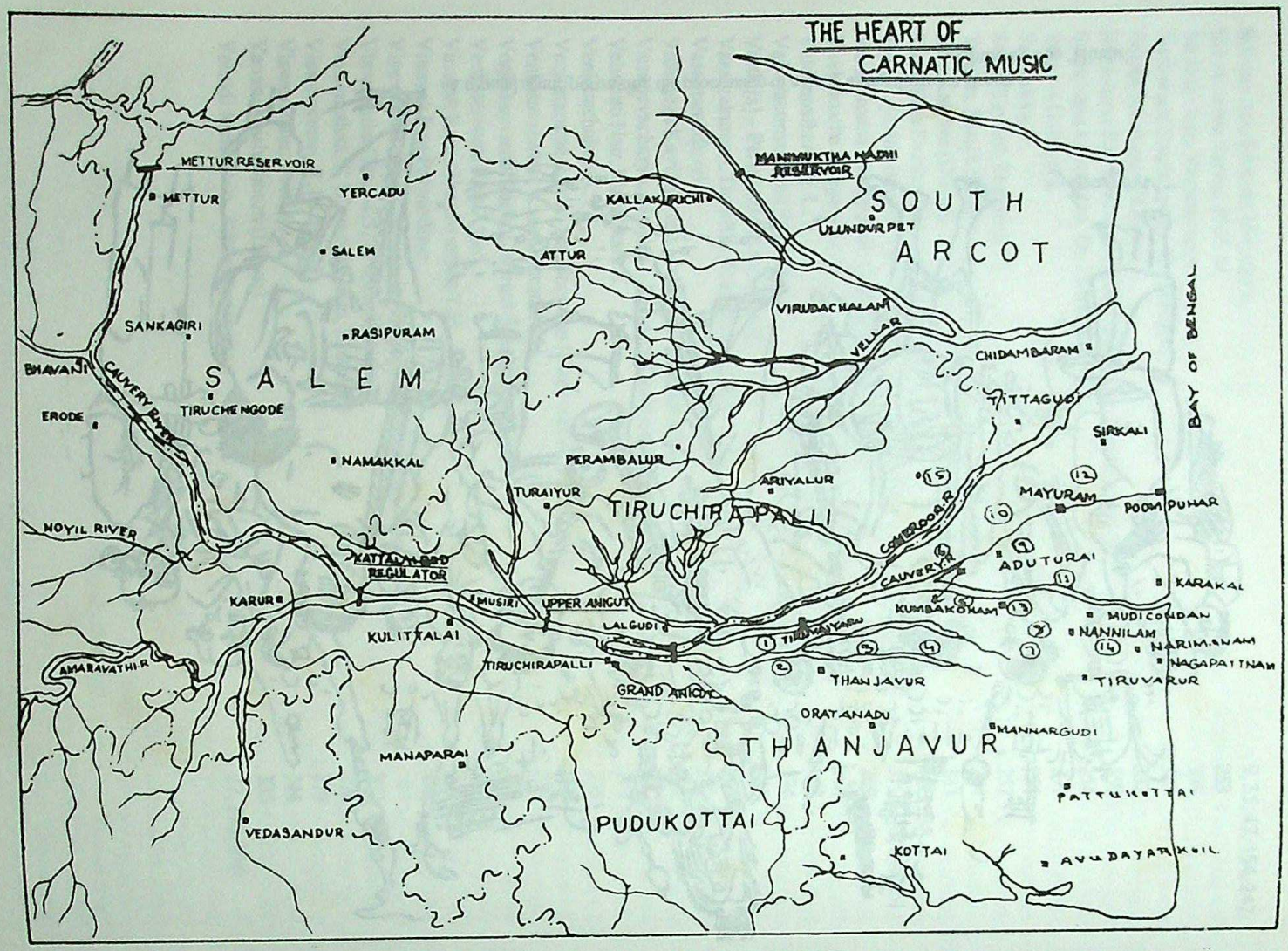
Subramania Bharati, Mahakavi 9,35,47,154,247
Subramonia Sarma, Prof. M. 253
Sudhakalasa, Vacanacarya 398
Sudharani Raghupathy, Dr. [Dance] 329
Sujata Srinivasan [Dancer] 332
Sulochana Pattabhiraman [Choreographer, Musicologist] 359
Sulochana Rajendran, Dr. [*Shanmukha*] 254
Sumitra Guha, D.L. 297
Surendran, V. 256
Swati Tirunal, Maharajah 257
Tansen, Sangit Samrat 294
Tara Kalyani [Dance] 333
Tirugñāna Sambandar, Apostle [*Yāḻmuri paṇ*] 126,358
Tyagaraja, the Bard of Tiruvaiyaru – Of Classical Trinity 3,13,111,145,261
Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, Chembai Sangita Kalanidhi 269
Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, R. 268
Vaidyanathan, Dr. L. 267
Vaijayantimala Bali [Dance] 334
Vaithi[s] – Peria and Chinna [Duo] 343
Vasantakumari, Dr. M.L. [Sangita Kalanidhi] 269
Vasantamadhavi 270
Vasudeva Kavi [Serfoji Maharajah Library Mss.] 271
Vasudevacharya, Mysore – Eminent Composer 27,272
Velukutti Nair, Mavelikara K. 274
Venkatachalam K. 275
Venkatarama Ayyar, Mudicondan [Musician of Musicians] 356
Venkatavaradan, Kanchipuram M.N. 276
Venkataswami Naidu, Dwaram Sangita Kalanidhi 275
Venkateswara Rao, Atluri 276
Vinayak Ram, Ghatam artiste T.H. 363,415
Vinayak Rao Patwardhan 298
Viswanatha Ayyar, Maharajapuram [Symbol of *Manōdharma*] 87
Viswanatha Das, M.S, - Patriot/dramatist 277
Viswanathan, S. [Kumbakonam, Brothers] 278
Visweswaran, R. [Santoor] 279
Visweswaran, Prof. R. 344
Yamini Krishnamurti [Dance] 335
Yehudi Menuehin. A Phenomenon 27,290,396

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

A typical scene portraying the procession of a deity along the main streets.
– Courtesy The 'Hindu'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar



THE HEART OF CARNATIC MUSIC

The course of the River Cauvery which had cradled a magnificent civilisation and which has been the chosen home of Music, Architecture, Sculpture and all Arts.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

"THE HEART OF CARNATIC MUSIC AND DANCE"

The Bard of Tiruvaiyaru hails it as 'Rajarajeswari'. The people of the delta worship it as their honoured mother or treat it as beloved daughter. From pre-historic times, it had generated a vibrant civilization and sustained a glorious culture that was soulful and a soul that was cultured. It has nurtured and cradled art, architecture, music, dance and everyone of the sixty-four arts in a measure that is the envy of the combined glory of Greece, Rome and Egypt. It is the River Cauvery, the Pride of the South. The map shows the river from Mettur Dam to its end at Poompuhar and the delta. A few places are indicated on the map and the numbers on the map indicate the approximate situation of the musical centres shown against each below: -

1. Tiruppoonturuti
2. Budalur
3. Vaiyacheri, Titte, Soolamangalam
4. Mangudi, Melattur
5. Valangaiman, Marudhanallur, Visalur
6. Kabistalam, Umayalpuram, Swamimalai
7. Tirucherai, Kodavasal, Semmangudi, Injikudi, Paruthikudi
8. Konerirajapuram, Tiruvizhimilalai, Tirupampuram, Achuthamangalam
9. Maruthuvakudi, Tiruvidaimarudur, Tirubhuvanam, Govindapuram, Kuttalam
10. Tiruppanandal, Tirukkodikaval, Tiruvisanallur, Pandanallur, Maraturai
11. Komal, Gudalur, Mandhai, Kothavasal
12. Vaideeswarankoil, Anandatandavapuram, Tiruvenkadu, Sembanarkoil
13. Nachiarkoil
14. Tirumarugal, Tiruchengattangudi, Nagore
15. Udayarpalayam, T. Pazhuvur

The course of the River Cauvery which had cradled a magnificent civilization has been the chosen home of Music, Architecture, Sculpture and all Arts.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Organised medley around soulful melody at a marriage: Cartoonist Keshav sparkles in his riotous configuration.

- Courtesy The *'Hindu'*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar
Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Maṅgalam

"Ye paṭhanti sadā bhṛityātēṣām sarvāgha nāśanam"

[Whoever reads this with dedication shall be divested of sins.]

[From Sri Tyagaraja's song *Jayamaṅgalam* in *rāga Mōhanam*]

☆☆☆

'May there be victorious *maṅgala*, ever auspicious *maṅgala*
To The Lord who is benevolent [and musical]
To the whole world which honours merit'

☆☆☆

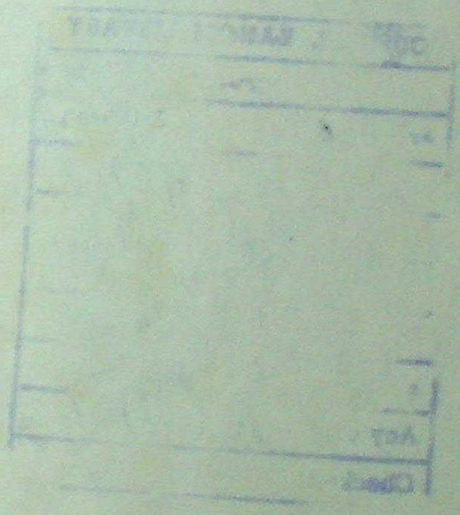
104326

पुस्तकालय

–By Courtesy : Sangita Kala Acharya S. Rajam

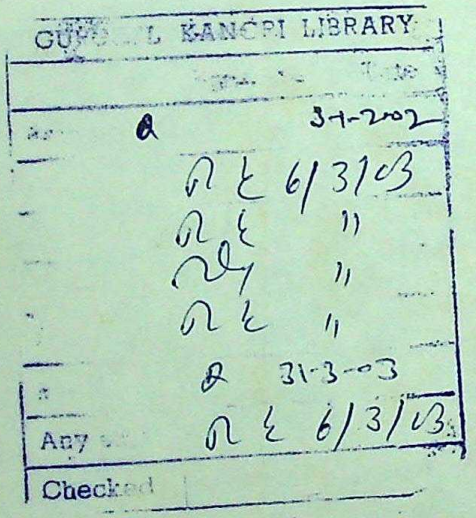
CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri



CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri



CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

On The Author

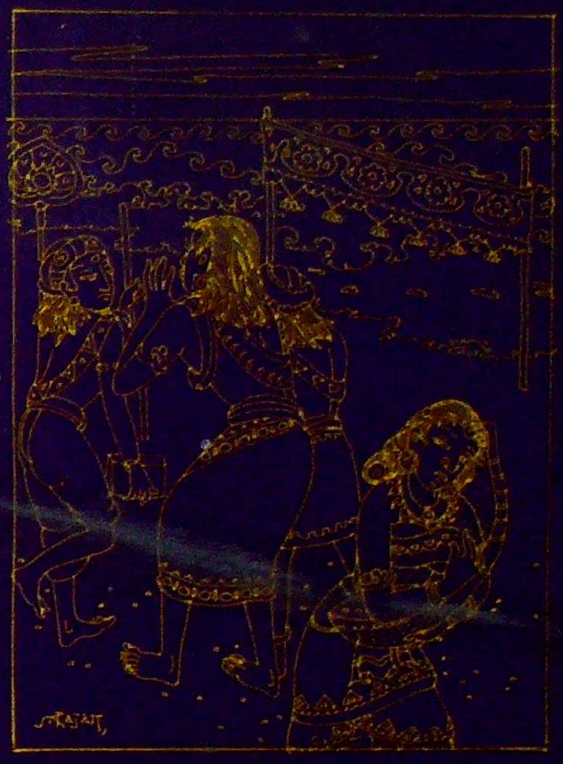
N. Rajagopalan, on retirement from the Indian Administrative Service, has concentrated on bringing out the first-ever Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers, Musicians, Musicologists as well as Bharatanatyam artistes in five volumes in the celebrated ***Garland*** series which contain, for the first time, interesting features on the lives of about 1600 artistes of the past and the present besides facts and figures and articles. These books constitute the source material for students, researchers, artistes and art-loving members of the public.

It is a pioneering work of vast parts, deep penetration and wide coverage which has few parallels. It is a non-profit dedication to art brought out by him on his own, the product of thirteen years of undivided toil. The material has been utilised by authorities, artistes, writers, students, etc. on a vast scale in magazines, souvenirs, etc.

The five volumes titled *A Garland, Another Garland, Yet Another Garland, Fragrant Garland* and this *Melodic Garland* are now before the public worthy of adorning the shelves of enlightened and inspiring private and public libraries.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Panini Kanya Maha Vidyalaya Collection.

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri



Our Publications

i.	**A Garland**	614 pages		Rs.260/-
ii.	**Another Garland**	528 pages	plus	Rs.250/-
iii.	**Yet Another Garland**	442 pages	plus	Rs.220/-
iv.	**The Fragrant Garland**	414 pages	plus	Rs.260/-
v.	**The Melodic Garland**	440 pages		Rs.260/-

About 1600 lives of musicians, dancers and composers covered

All hard-bound in plastic covers. Photos and Maps illumine the books.

Post-free in India.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar